



English – Or.
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European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FORUM: LET'S ACT NOW!

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CONCEPT NOTE & PROGRAMME

27-28 May 2025

Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg

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1 INTRODUCTION

The long-term vision of the Council of Europe's Education Strategy is that all learners will be able to fully exercise their rights as active citizens in democratic societies. Human rights-based digital transformation of education is one of the 3 priority pillars of the strategy.

Digital transformation of education has changed the landscape dramatically in recent years having contributed to enhancing teaching and learning processes, widening access to educational resources, promoting digital literacy, and fostering innovative approaches that improve educational outcomes and equip learners for the digital age.

The Council of Europe has launched the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 (European Year 2025) to give a new impetus to the development and promotion of digital citizenship education in all member states.

The European Year 2025 stands as a unique opportunity **to enhance the visibility and impact** of digital citizenship education (DCE) and reaffirm its value. This designated year shall provide **a strategic platform** for key stakeholders from the public, private and civil sectors **to work together, set common goals and share sense-making practices**. It will provide a concise yet impactful space for measuring achievements and collectively defining a road map for the future of digital citizenship education. Through streamlined efforts, this initiative is expected to propel DCE forward, ensuring its resilience and effectiveness in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

The European Year 2025 will also

- raise awareness of the value of digital citizenship education;
- enhance stakeholders' understanding of the Council of Europe's digital citizenship education framework;
- establish digital citizenship education as a long-term policy priority;
- promote cross-sector collaboration in digital citizenship education;
- advance access to resources and innovative practices in digital citizenship education.

The Council of Europe has officially kicked off the European Year 2025 with the Launch Conference on 23-24 January 2025, which also celebrated the International Education Day. More than hundred participants, including government representatives, policy makers, experts, education and academia members, civil society, parents and youth representation bodies attended the conference. Challenges and solutions to such essential topics like communication about DCE, international cooperation, coordinated approach by the stakeholders and integration of digital citizenship education in education and training were discussed. The conference also provided the opportunity to highlight and disseminate innovative practices and successful models in digital citizenship education in different regions of the Council of Europe.

The Digital Citizenship Education Forum will further look into ways of promoting international and local discourse on digital citizenship education, as well as enhancing international collaboration and stakeholder engagement in formal, informal and non-formal education settings.

The closing conference of the European Year, defining new priorities and agreeing on the road map for the future of digital citizenship education in Europe and beyond will take place on 18-19 November in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

2 DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FORUM

2.1 Forum focus & format

The digital environment and technologies provide unprecedented means and opportunities for people to express themselves in different ways, to discover, learn and create, to communicate and socialise, and to actively participate in their communities. But they also bring new challenges.

Amidst the challenges exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the advent of disruptive technologies like ChatGPT, the challenging issues that digital citizenship education seeks to address such as disinformation, cyberbullying, online hate speech and the misuse of personal data have become more prominent. This underlines the urgent need for increased efforts and investment in DCE to empower learners of all ages to face the challenges created or amplified by digital technologies and harness the benefits to thrive.

The Forum is designed in a way as to help the member states in further creating inclusive, equitable, and empowering learning environments. The outcomes of the Forum are called to foster the integration of digital citizenship education as a policy priority, to redesign pedagogical approaches and learning environments, as well as to leverage digital technologies to benefit all learners. The ultimate goal of the Forum is to contribute to identifying realistic actions to respond to the challenges that have emerged or been amplified by digital technologies.

The Forum will also provide a platform to enhance cross-sector cooperation through tackling current challenges that can be and should be collectively prioritised by digital citizenship education. Plenary sessions and parallel forum talks are projected to reflect on the experiences and progress from the Council of Europe member states, to summarise key ideas and ask questions, to provide expert insights and to foster dialogue between the stakeholders with the prospect of improving the current state. The Forum will also contribute to the development of the road map for the future of digital citizenship education as a holistic approach.

The main objectives of the Forum are:

- to promote multistakeholder collaboration taking full advantage of benefits provided by digital citizenship education,
- to showcase DCE initiatives and knowledge material on pan-European and international levels, and
- to validate thematic directions and to develop specific actions for the road map for the next 5 years.

The Digital Citizenship Education Forum will take place on 27-28 May 2025 in the Hemicycle and adjacent meeting rooms of the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg, France.

The working languages of the Forum will be English and French (interpretation will be provided).

2.2 The road map of digital citizenship education

One of the main expected outcomes of the Forum is the validation of thematic directions and identification of concrete actions to feed in the road map of digital citizenship education for the next 5 years (2027-2031). The identified strategic directions of the road map derive from the objectives of the European Year 2025:

1. **Raising awareness and enhancing communication** on the critical role and the value of digital citizenship education in empowering learners to thrive ethically, responsibly, and effectively in a digitally connected world;

2. ***Fostering education stakeholders' engagement*** in the Council of Europe's DCE framework, highlighting its leading role in ensuring meaningful and inclusive digital transformation;
3. ***Establishing digital citizenship education as a long-term policy priority*** based on a shared commitment of making DCE a central focus in education policies and practices across member states;
4. ***Promoting international and cross-sectoral collaboration*** through establishing meaningful partnerships and initiatives among public, private, and civil society stakeholders at local, national, and international levels to drive innovation and effectiveness in DCE;
5. ***Integrating DCE in education and training*** to support the development and dissemination of high-quality education resources, creative teaching methods, and practical tools that enable effective and inclusive DCE across diverse contexts.

2.3 Why participate?

The Digital Citizenship Forum "Let's Act Now!" will provide an excellent opportunity for networking and establishing contacts with the leading international experts, educators and professionals in the field of digital citizenship education. As one of the main objectives of the event is enhancing cross-sector cooperation, the Forum will provide the arena to discuss topics pertinent to digital citizenship education with all the stakeholders in one place!

The Forum will also provide the unique chance to contribute to the co-creation of the 5-year road map which will shape the future of digital citizenship education in Europe and beyond.

And finally: the plenary sessions will be held in the Hemicycle of the Council of Europe, which is the Chamber for the sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The Forum is the signature event of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025!

2.4 Prospective participants

The Forum will provide an opportunity for a diverse range of key stakeholders to come together to exchange practices and innovative solutions. Government experts and policy makers, representatives of international organisations, professional associations, civil society organisations, think tanks and private sector companies active in the field, community leaders, curriculum developers, researchers, educators and academics working on digital citizenship education or in relevant fields are welcome to apply to attend the Forum in the capacity of participants or speakers/presenters.

3 PROGRAMME

Day 1: Learning and Practicing Digital Citizenship Education

The first day of the Forum will highlight the benefits and the opportunities provided by digital citizenship education. It will act as a showcase for resources and hands-on solutions to various challenges that digital citizenship education is facing. The Forum will also contribute to enhancing understanding of DCE as a central component for sustaining and protecting democratic culture.

Keynote speakers will provide insights into how current trends and developments are reshaping the field of digital citizenship education. The sessions during Day 1 will highlight the global landscape of DCE contributing to the development of the road map.

09:00 Session I – Plenary session and group photo in Hemicycle (1 hour)

- *welcome speeches*
- *keynote speeches by 1-2 invited speakers – benefits and opportunities for strengthening DCE globally*

10:00 Coffee break (0.5 hour)

10:30 Session II – A new Democratic Pact: how can DCE help foster democracy in digital era, Hemicycle (1.5 hours)

The plenary discussion will evolve around a set of prepared questions on how digital citizenship education can foster democracy in Europe and beyond in the context of global political crisis (1 hour), followed by a Q&A session (30 min)

12:00 Lunch (1.5 hours)

13:30 Session III – Opening of DCE resources showcase, Foyer of Hemicycle (1.5 hours)

- *opening speech to present the objective and the aim of the showcase*
- *resources/knowledge material/tools for DCE by the stakeholders from civil society, IT companies and academia*

The showcase of resources, or the DCE Expo, is called to present the variety of digital citizenship education resources and to further facilitate exchange of information and experiences between the contributors of the Forum.

15:00 Session IV – Forum talks in five parallel meeting rooms (2 hours)

- *five experts outline the overview/benefits of the proposed topics*
- *four speakers present their initiatives on each of the five topics*
- *facilitated group discussion around proposed questions (1 hour)*

Discussion topics in 5 parallel groups:

- Forum talk 1: Promoting active participation: youth-led initiatives in practicing digital citizenship, Room 6
- Forum talk 2: Parenting in the digital age: nurturing digital citizenship and democracy, Room 7
- Forum talk 3: Platforms and citizenship: what technology companies are doing to promote digital civility and democratic culture, Room 8
- Forum talk 4: Democracy in schools: fostering inclusion and empowerment through DCE, Room 10
- Forum talk 5: Teaching digital citizenship: from classroom to cyberspace, Room 11

The session will provide an overview of the topic in each of the Forum talks, will reveal outstanding initiatives that have made a difference at local, national or international level and will provide the arena for the participants to share their insights and lessons learnt around suggested questions for open discussion. The results of the session will be summarized by the rapporteurs and will be presented to the organising team.

The discussions will evolve around several specific questions to receive future-oriented and solution-focused responses.

17:30 Reception, Foyer of Hemicycle, courtesy of Council of Europe

Day 2: Transforming Knowledge into Action

The second day of the Forum will provide a platform for the participants to contemplate about strategic approaches to get tangible results and stronger commitment (and action!) from governments and education systems to develop a cohesive and sustainable road map for the future of digital citizenship education.

9:00 Session V – Responding to Current Challenges and Political Priorities (2 hours)

- *five experts outline the overview/benefits of the proposed topics*
- *four speakers present their initiatives on each of the five topics*
- *facilitated group discussion around proposed questions (1 hour)*

Discussion topics in 5 parallel groups:

- Forum talk 6: Tackling online disinformation (disinformation, fake news and political manipulation), Room 6
- Forum talk 7: Ensuring well-being (coping with cyberbullying and online harassment), Room 7
- Forum talk 8: Fostering inclusive and accessible digital communities (vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities), Room 8
- Forum talk 9: New ways of creative learning: videogame culture, Room 11
- Forum talk 10: Digital footprint and reputation (long-term impact from the perspective of social and professional contexts), Room 10

The session will provide an overview of the topic in each of the Forum talks, will reveal outstanding initiatives that have made a difference at local, national or international level and will provide the arena for the participants to share their insights and lessons learnt around suggested questions for open discussion. The results of the session will be summarized by the rapporteurs and will be presented to the organising team and at the panel during the following session.

11:00 Coffee break (0.5 hour)

11:30 Session VI – Innovative approaches for the future of DCE in Hemicycle (1 hour)

The moderated panel discussion will summarize the answers and solutions to the challenges discussed during the morning session and will be aligned to feed the strategic objectives of the road map.

12:30 Lunch (1.5 hours)

14:00 Session VII – Closing of the Forum in Hemicycle (1 hour)

Presentation of an example from national campaign in a member state: report from activities on national/local level (10 min)

Results of the Forum will be summarized stating that collaboration platforms are established, and key actions of the roadmap are defined (30 min)

Closure of the event: a call for action to collaborate and engage in the global movement for digital citizenship education during and after 2025 (20 min)