

**20
25** EUROPEAN YEAR OF
DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP
EDUCATION

#LearnConnectEngageThrive



Closing Conference “The Way Forward”
Ljubljana · 18-19 NOVEMBER 2025



*CLOSING CONFERENCE OF THE
EUROPEAN YEAR OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP
EDUCATION 2025 – “THE WAY FORWARD”*

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Special thanks are extended to the organising team of the conference which includes staff members of the Education Department of the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity of the Council of Europe and the DIGI.DR project.



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



THE RECOVERY
AND RESILIENCE
PLAN



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FOREWORD

Villano Qiriaz
Head of Education Department
Council of Europe

The Closing Conference of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 marks a significant milestone in the collective efforts to foster responsible and active participation in digital society.

The initiatives and collaborations undertaken throughout this year have strengthened understanding of what it means to be a digital citizen. The importance of equipping learners of all ages with digital competences, democratic values, and critical thinking necessary for today's interconnected world has been underlined throughout the European Year.

The European Year 2025 has been a collective effort resulting in progress, inspiring innovative educational practices, informing policy development, and fostering new forms of international cooperation. Partnerships formed over the past year have shown that digital citizenship is a shared responsibility, best addressed through dialogue and collaboration across member states and stakeholders from different sectors. This spirit of cooperation has been reflected in the wide range of projects, resources, and exchanges highlighted in these proceedings.

Looking to the future, the Road Map for Strengthening Digital Citizenship Education for 2027-2031 provides a shared reference point, outlining priorities and concrete actions for the years ahead. As a living document, it ensures that the momentum gained over the past year continues and guides further progress in the field of digital citizenship education.

This collection of conference proceedings stands as both a record of what has been achieved so far during the year and as a foundation for future cooperation, innovation, and commitment to advance digital citizenship for the benefit of all.

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Information Sovereignty

A Content-Neutral Approach to Countering Foreign Disinformation Campaigns

I am here to propose an alternative approach to disinformation threats that I believe will help stakeholders safeguard democracy and promote good citizenship in Europe. This approach targets all foreign content brought into a country's (or Europe's) information space under false pretences, without regard to the message itself. A government would not have to wade into the politically sensitive swirl of speech evaluation, though others outside of government could use the data to debunk falsity. The governmental authority would only go so far as to flag the false designation of origin or source of clandestine cross-border information flow. Such an approach would also align well with the European Union's great work on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), as authorities would use established forensic capabilities to identify falsely designated speech generated as a part of a known influence campaign architecture or as a product of information laundering.

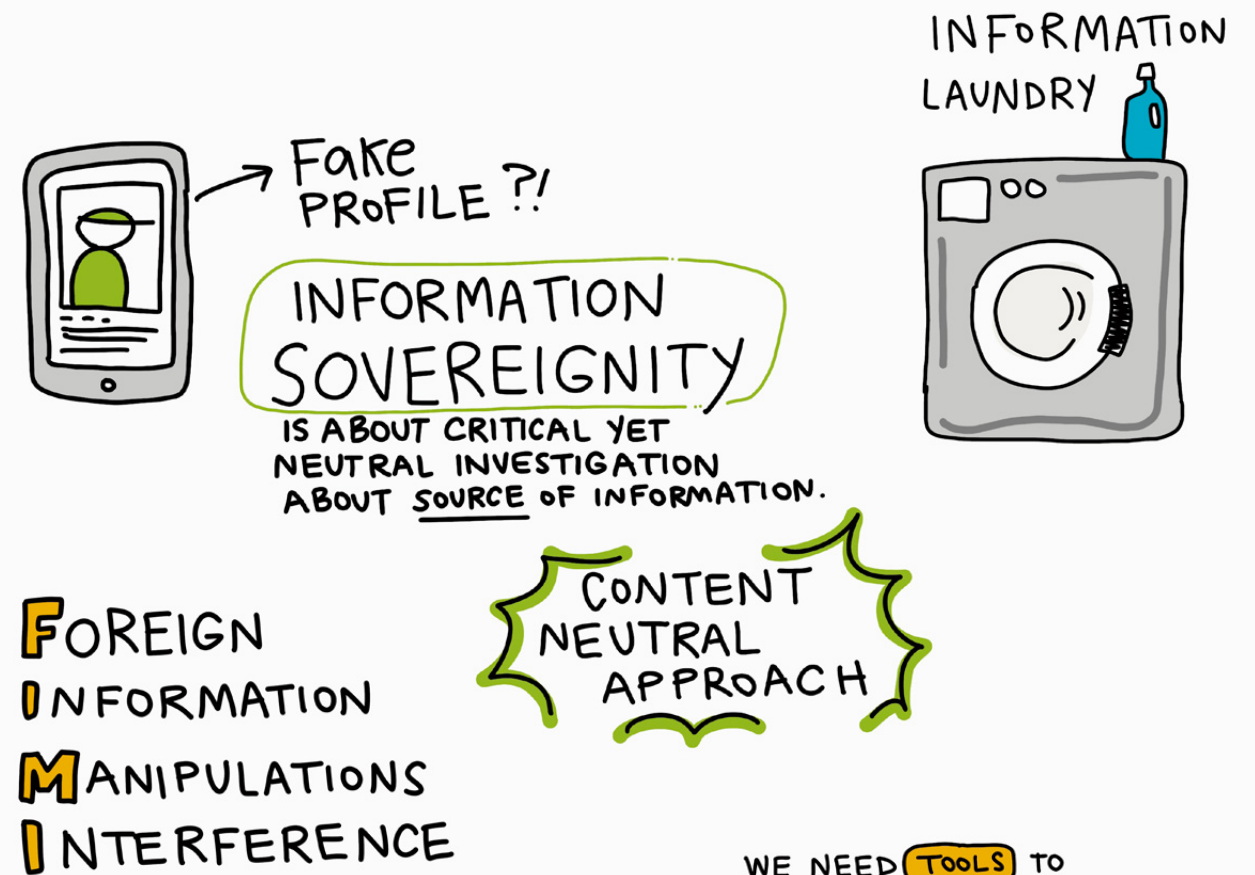
Citizens should have a right to know the authenticity of content-producers and whether the content is labelled with a false-designation of origin. This should be the case even if the content is truthful or, ostensibly, benign. Foreign entities that flood a nation's (or Europe's) information space with truthful or seemingly benign information may be advancing an agenda that skews democratic debate among citizens in Europe. This approach may also allow the Council to address the still-open question of whether to include corporate social responsibility in the framework, since some cross-border manipulation is devised to advance private economic agendas.



In my view, there is also a strategic benefit to advancing a cross-border information flow approach. A content-neutral approach may reduce pushback from governments in countries where political divisions may discourage adoption of content-based approaches to disinformation. In my research, I have seen that some governments fear being labelled as censorship advocates if they take an aggressive position against false political viewpoints. In a divided nation, that can harm the trust that is needed to advance good government principles. It also impacts trust in citizenship education, especially if there is pushback from parents or teachers. A content-neutral approach allows governments to stay above politics; the focus is on trying to keep a country's information space free from foreign manipulation, which is why I have been using the term "information sovereignty".

At the end of the day, a content-neutral approach will uncover the same FIMI threats that an evaluative, content-based approach would flag. But it adds two important advantages. Citizens will benefit from the greater transparency that comes from knowing the false designation of origin of all speech by all foreign entities, including purportedly benign actors. It may also increase "buy-in" by governments in politically divided nations who fear that taking a position on truth or accuracy may alienate a portion of their political base.

Professor Michael Epstein
Southwestern Law School,
Los Angeles, CA, USA



WE NEED **TOOLS** TO
MITIGATE MISINFORMATION.

The fight against
DISINFORMATION
might be the fight of our time.



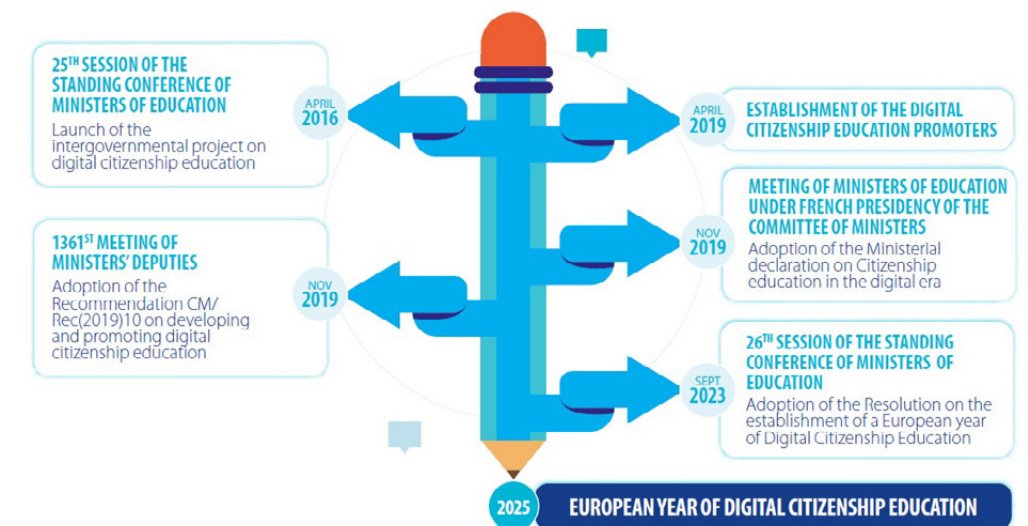
WHERE IS THE
ORIGIN OF
INFORMATION?

IT IS PART OF A
CAMPAIGN?

WHAT IS THE INTEREST
BEHIND?

✍️ Lara Kastelic

The European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025



2016-2025

Genesis of the initiative

The Council of Europe's Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) agenda has grown from an innovative idea into a European movement during the past decade.

When the initiative began in 2016, it was set out to answer a question that still resonates today: how can education help learners not only survive the digital world, but shape it – ethically, critically, and democratically?

At the heart of this agenda lies the conviction that digital citizenship is human citizenship – that the rights, duties, and responsibilities extend seamlessly across offline and online spaces for every single person.

The Digital Citizenship Education programme is an essential part of the Council of Europe's wider [New Democratic Pact](#) for Europe and its Education Strategy "Learners First" (2024-2030), which call for a human-rights-based transformation of education. It is anchored in the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), which provides the conceptual backbone of the DCE model – ten domains of digital competences that empower learners to

act responsibly, critically, and empathetically in all environments, digital or otherwise.

In 2019, the Committee of Ministers gave political recognition to this vision through Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 on Digital Citizenship Education, encouraging member states to integrate DCE into national curricula, teacher training, and education governance.

In 2023, the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education designated 2025 as the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education. More than 200 activities to mark this important milestone were implemented by 28 member states of the Council of Europe.

Implementation of the [European Year of Digital Citizenship Education in 2025](#) served as a symbol of the global transition to online environments during the past 20 years as 2005 has been celebrated as the European Year of Citizenship Education.

State of DCE in member states

On 21 November 2019 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education (the Recommendation). One of the clauses in the document is that the implementation of the Recommendation should be examined at least every five years. The Education Department commissioned the Review of the Recommendation in the second half of 2024 with the following 3 objectives.



Review of the Recommendation

1

Reviewing the legislation, policies and practices in members states, as well as the implementation of digital citizenship education in formal, non-formal and informal education settings.

2

Reviewing the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation of digital citizenship education legislation, policies and practices, including through the provision of appropriate resources and training.

3

Reviewing the creation of frameworks for co-operation between public, private and civil sectors and education institutions in line with national, European and international standards.

The Review was conducted through extensive desk research and an online validation survey. The desk research covered national, European and international sources to map the relevant policies, actions and cooperation frameworks implemented at national and international level in the field of digital citizenship education. The findings of the desk research at national

level were then validated through an online survey with national authorities who are part of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) as well as Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) Promoters' Network.

The study found that only five member states (Belgium, France, Iceland, Malta and Moldova) make explicit

reference to the DCE Recommendation or DCE principles of the Council of Europe in their policy documents or curriculum. Some member states refer to other initiatives of the Council of Europe on lifelong learning, the rights of the child in the digital environment and education for democratic citizenship in their national strategic documents.

Despite not referring directly to the DCE Recommendation of the Council of Europe, many member states have other relevant national strategies and policies in place, conveying some of the principles of the DCE Recommendation, for instance on digital education, digital skills, media literacy, online safety, digital citizenship, or digitalisation in general. These initiatives are mostly national strategies, action plans, road maps, national agendas or programmes, implemented through legislation, revisions of the learning frameworks, funding programmes and soft-law measures.

One of the main conclusions of the Review is that some of the topics of the digital citizenship education, like digital skills, digital education frameworks, online safety, media literacy and digital inclusion are covered through frameworks, policies, and guidelines developed by several European (Council of Europe, European Union) institutions and international organisations (OECD, UNICEF, UNESCO). These documents, while generally not binding, play a significant role in shaping the national policies and practices of the Council of Europe member states.

One of the main recommendations of the Review is that member states should introduce more directly the principles of the DCE Recommendation into their national policies and curricula and develop provisions for the monitoring and evaluation of their national policies related to DCE.

During the European Year 2025, 28 member states of the Council of Europe implemented more than 200 activities promoting digital citizenship education. The activities included awareness raising events and teacher education and training, policy curriculum development and research. A detailed report on the implementation of the European Year by the member states and the Council of Europe will be released in the second quarter of 2026.



Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 on developing and promoting digital citizenship education



Slovenia's leadership and DIGI.DR project

Strengthening Digital Citizenship in Educational Institutions (DIGI.DR) is a national Slovenian project that is strengthening media education and digital citizenship practices across kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools.

It is developing age- and context-specific preventive guidelines, materials, and practical approaches, and piloting them in educational settings with the active involvement of professionals, pupils, students, and parents. The project is evaluating these outputs for usability and professional relevance, with the aim of strengthening stakeholders' capacity to support children and young people in active and responsible participation in digital society. The resulting resources will be published on the project website and via the SIO portal for nationwide use. The project is co-funded by the Republic of Slovenia (Ministry of Education) and the European Union – NextGenerationEU. In addition to other national activities, Slovenia, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, also organised the international closing conference of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education "The Way Forward".



Project website:
digidr.si



"THE WAY FORWARD"

The Closing Conference of the European Year 2025

The European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 came to its end. The European Year 2025 underlined once again the crucial role digital transformation of education plays in protecting and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The European Year served as a showcase of all the resources and knowledge material that has been developed across wider Europe so far; attracted attention once again to the urgent need to take action to make DCE a policy priority, to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration and to facilitate access of all the learners to those resources and opportunities to learn, connect and engage positively. Only through coordinated and targeted actions all the stakeholder groups, which include youth, policy makers, parents and carers, experts and researchers as well as education sector and civil society can reach a point where all the learners enjoy their rights equally offline and online through constructive, responsible and meaningful engagement with digital technologies.

The launch conference of the European Year, held on 23-24 January 2025 and attended by a diverse group of stakeholders, discussed outstanding challenges like communication about DCE, international cooperation, coordinated approach by the stakeholders and integration of digital citizenship in education and training.

Enhancing multistakeholder collaboration for tangible results and key strategic objectives of the future road map were the main points of discussion during the European Forum of Digital Citizenship Education held on 27-28 May 2025.

The closing conference aimed at summarising the progress that the partners from the Council of Europe member states achieved during the European Year 2025, as well as defining the future of digital citizenship education. The first draft of the road map was presented and discussed during the closing conference with all the stakeholder groups with the aim of finalising and validating the document in a consultative process. The document has been developed in the course of the European Year, based on the reflections and main outcomes of the launch conference, May Forum and discussions with DCE Promoters and experts.

Opening speeches

Nataša Pirc Musar

PRESIDENT OF SLOVENIA



Dear participants of the closing international conference of the European Year of Education for Digital Citizenship, The Way Forward!

At a time when artificial intelligence is entering our world at an unimaginable speed, it is crucial that we understand digital competences not only as technical knowledge, but also as the ability to understand, judge and create in a digital society. This is precisely why the project “Strengthening Digital Citizenship in Slovenian Educational Institutions”, Digi.dr, is so important. With its integrative approach, collaboration between experts from various fields and a clear vision, it has laid the foundations on which we will and must build a society which knows how to use technology rather than live under its weight.

Education for digital citizenship is no longer a choice, it is a prerequisite for a free and responsible future. If we want our children to be not only users but rather creators of the digital age, we must provide them with tools in schools, kindergartens and at home that will lead them to critical thinking, awareness of responsible online behaviour and protection of their digital identity.

It is therefore particularly valuable that the project promotes understanding of the digital world in kindergartens, among the youngest, and develops guidelines, materials and good practices in primary and secondary schools which help pupils, parents and teachers to build on their knowledge, responsibility and trust. It is important that we know how to use technology safely, creatively and ethically, that we know how to distinguish fact from manipulation, and that we preserve our humanity in a world of algorithms. Only by developing digital literacy and awareness of the consequences of our actions can we create a digital society based on knowledge, cooperation and mutual respect.

I wish you a successful conference and a constructive exchange of views and good practices, with an eye to the future, and I would also like to thank the Council of Europe for its cooperation. All the best¹ !

¹ – Translated from Slovenian

Vinko Logaj

MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF SLOVENIA

Dear Madam President of the Republic of Slovenia, Ms. Nataša Pirc Musar, Dear participants, esteemed guests, and all others present. Welcome to the closing conference of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education. This marks the end of an important European initiative and lays the groundwork for future development.

At a time when digital technologies are transforming every aspect of our lives and we are confronted with the virtually limitless possibilities of artificial intelligence, education for digital citizenship is essential for full, responsible participation and co-creation in modern society. The digital environment offers countless opportunities, but it also presents risks and challenges that require thoughtful consideration and coordinated action — both in practice within educational institutions and at the systemic level. European and international cooperation plays a crucial role in helping us understand the potential effects and complexities of issues related to modern digital technologies, including artificial intelligence. For this reason, we believe it is essential to pay appropriate attention to the human and social dimensions in this context, as emphasized by the Council of Europe.

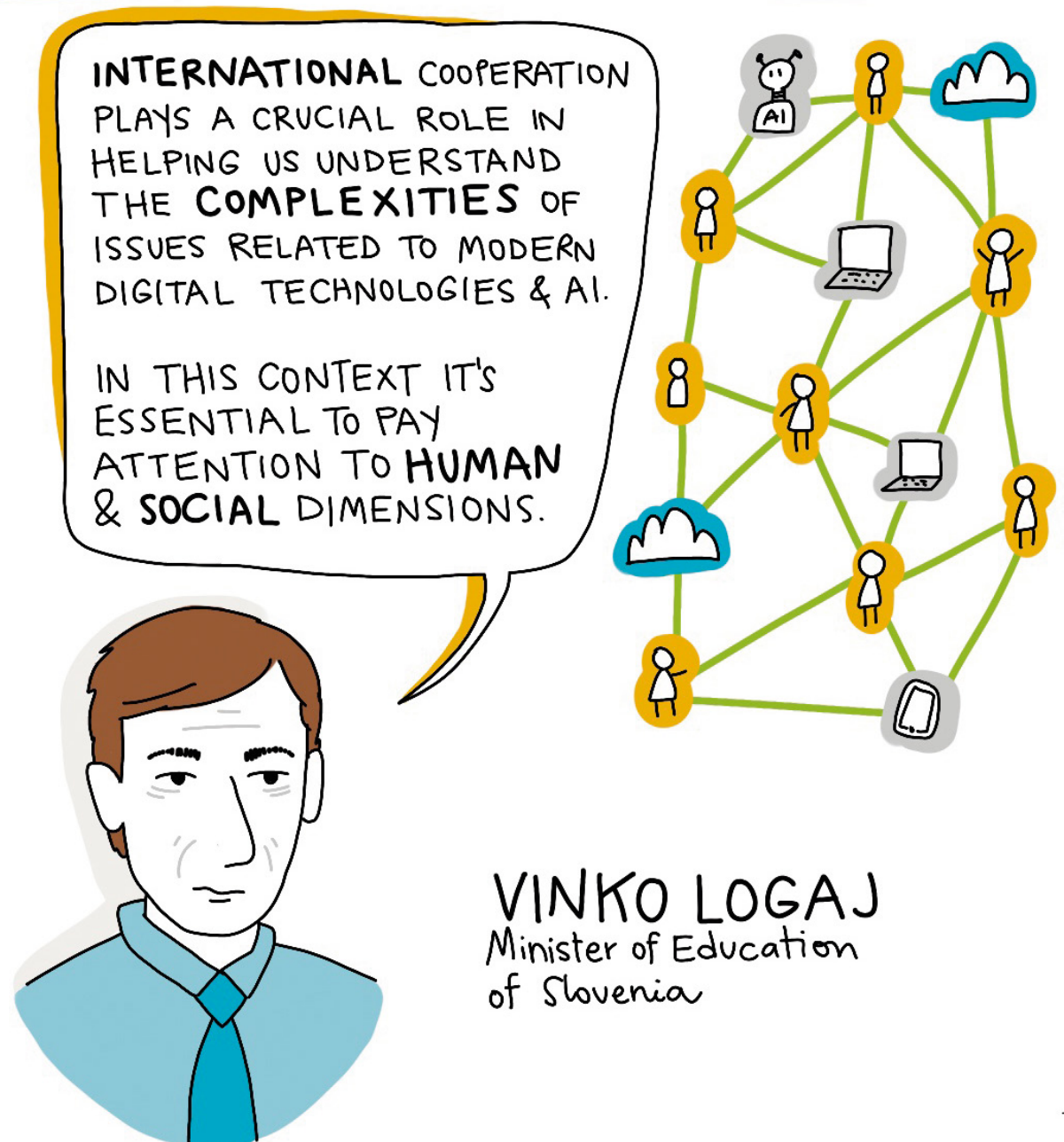
Through the establishment of the Strengthening Digital Citizenship in Slovenian Educational Institutions project, Digi.dr, we are laying the foundations for the long-term integration of digital citizenship education content into our education system. The project content directly addresses key issues in education and training, which are also emphasized in the context of curriculum reform.

Today's conference, which we are hosting in Slovenia in cooperation with the Council of Europe, offers an opportunity to assess our progress and outline concrete steps for the future. The Council of Europe's Road Map for Digital Citizenship Education provides a practical framework for further action. Slovenia will contribute its experience and best practices, particularly in areas such as strengthening media literacy, promoting digital well-being, and encouraging the ethical use of technology.

As I have often pointed out, digital skills are the key to safely navigating the digital world and a prerequisite for using digital tools, which have become indispensable in a digital society. In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Council of Europe for its partnership and support, and to all participating institutions and individuals in Slovenia for their professionalism and commitment to our shared goals.

I wish all participants an inspiring and successful conference. Thank you very much, and good luck².

² – Translated from Slovenian

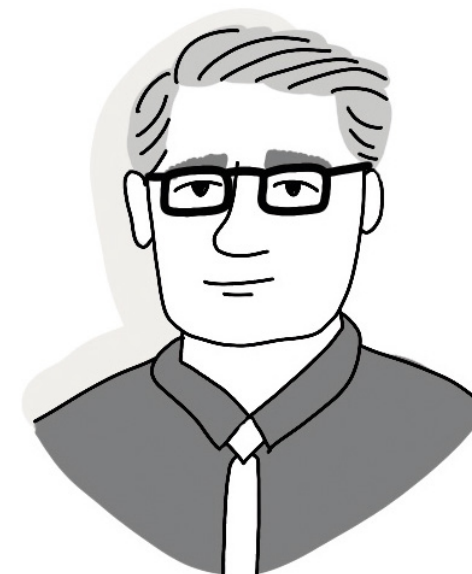


Flora Kastelic



Matjaž Gruden

**DIRECTOR FOR DEMOCRACY,
COUNCIL OF EUROPE**



**Dear Minister, dear participants,
There is only one thing better than a very, very well
prepared and interesting conference, and that is a
very, very well prepared and interesting conference
in Ljubljana. Believe me, I am very objective about
that. I am from Ljubljana myself.**

Welcome to this closing conference of the 2025 European Year of Digital Citizenship, so kindly hosted by Slovenia. I would like to thank the Slovenian team of the Recovery and Resilience Plan project “Strengthening Digital Citizenship in Slovenian Educational Institutions”, supported by the Slovenian Ministry of Education, for their hard work in preparing this conference and for their contribution to the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education.

In 1966, the German philosopher, cultural and music critic Theodor Adorno had a radio program. I guess it was a podcast before podcasts. And in that famous radio program, he said that the premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz should not happen again. I believe in 1966 that was understandable; it was only 20 years after the 27th of January 1945, when the Allied forces liberated Auschwitz.

So, the first question would really be whether Adorno today would have said the same thing. Would he not? Would we, if he did, call him a drama queen and say he exaggerates? I’m not so sure.

The second question is whether, if he reflected upon the role of education today, the unprecedented technical development – digital, and especially artificial intelligence – would have an impact on his views.

We can be certain that in 1966, digital technology was not high on his mind. In fact, it was just a year after IBM produced its System 360 – a revolution at the time, but the size of a concert piano. I Googled it: it was in order of millions slower than my iPhone 15. Imagine watching a TikTok video on that or trying to download an app.

That difference in magnitude is not just symbolic; it really reflects the difference between 1966 and today. In the world we live in, good things can happen faster and go further – but bad things, too. Not because technology itself is good or bad. Technology is value-neutral, but people often are not. Even with all our technological development and the unthinkable progress of AI, we are still talking about human-to-human interaction through and with technology. That’s why fostering human agency is so important. That’s why education is crucial, including – and especially so – that Auschwitz does not happen again.

What happens in the classroom really matters. The objective is clear: to empower learners to act as engaged, responsible, and ethical digital citizens.

Now, if I can go back to the origins of this European Year of Digital Citizenship that brought us to this conference: The Council of Europe started to work on these matters a few years earlier, but it was in November 2019 – just before the COVID pandemic – when the French presidency of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers organised a conference of Ministers of Education in Paris. At that conference, we were asked to provide the keynote speaker. I think at the time we got as subversive as bureaucrats ever do: we invited the director and president of the Linz Ars Electronica Festival, Gerfried Stocker. Gerfried of course came to the ministerial conference in his crumpled t-shirt and ponytail, and his speech mesmerized the ministers.

If I may sum up what he said: for successful digital citizenship education, you need four ingredients. First, you have to teach learners to understand the infrastructure of digital technology and especially AI – not just how to use it, but to understand it; to know what’s in the box. This is necessary to benefit fully from its potential and to protect yourself so it can’t be misused against you. Understanding its human and environmental costs as well – use it responsibly. I often think that one short sentence or question – “Grok, is this true?” which peppers through everyone’s Twitter feed – probably has a higher carbon imprint than all airline companies together. Don’t believe me? If you’re checking this with Grok now, you are complicit in this environmental recklessness.

Second, and this leads us to competencies for democratic culture: values, attitudes, knowledge, critical

understanding, and skills – notably, critical thinking. These are not alternatives to EdTech, nor competitors; they go hand in hand. The AI transformation of our society makes both the competencies for democratic culture more important and more challenging.

Third, classical knowledge: literature, languages, geography, history – critically important. And, as much as it pains me remembering my own school days, I guess kids should still learn math and physics. There’s no critical thinking without knowledge. Investing in knowledge is essential if you want to counter the distortion that has framed “critical thinking” as a rejection of knowledge, facts and rationality.

Fourth, art. Art is essential because it fosters creativity and innovation, provides an important means of reflection, learning, and transmitting values, and reinforces our human and social confidence and intelligence. Most of Gerfried’s advice – or as much as ministers could digest – found its way into the 2019 Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Digital Citizenship Education (2019/10). This recommendation built on Council of Europe work since 2016 and led to the 2025 European Year of Digital Citizenship and this final conference in Ljubljana.

The last years brought significant progress, but there are also gaps. We see national implementation of digital citizenship education is still too low, with the exception of Slovenia and its projects strengthening digital citizenship in educational institutions. There is also a



lack of standards, leading to overlapping mandates and a lack of policy cohesion. Hence the road map for digital citizenship education for 2027–2031. I look forward to the rich discussion here with so many stakeholders; I think this provides the perfect launch of the digital citizenship road map, which will build on successful national practices, bring together all concerned, put students and teachers at the heart of the process, be flexible – not prescriptive – and above all, concrete. Theoretical ideas discussed at the European level won’t by themselves change the situation; what happens in the classroom really matters. The objective is clear: to empower learners to act as engaged, responsible, and ethical digital citizens.

At the Council of Europe, digital citizenship education is part of the Directorate for Democracy and supports the New Democratic Pact for Europe, aiming to respond to democratic backsliding seen in recent years. The new Pact has three pillars: learning and practicing democracy; protecting democracy; and innovating for democracy.

Education for digital citizenship, this conference, and the future road map will contribute to all three. In May 2027, we expect the New Democratic Pact for Europe to be presented to the Council of Europe Ministers and we are determined that bold and ambitious commitment to education, including and especially education for digital citizenship, will figure as one of its most significant outcomes.

The future is already here: fast, unpredictable, sometimes a bit frightening. Digital citizenship education is a critical tool to foster human agency – to manage and master change and make the best of it for everyone. At the end, the premier demand on every education has not changed that much since 1966; perhaps it has even become more urgent. Digital citizenship education is a way to make our world a safer, more just, and kinder place. Perhaps not at the order of millions of times better – but if we make it just a little bit nicer, it will already be huge.

Thank you very much.

Presentations in Thematic Sessions

SESSION I –

Being Online: Media and Information Literacy

Hermann Abs

Professor of Education Research at
the University of Duisburg-Essen

Germany

The main focus of his work is on citizenship education. Mr Abs has been a National Research Coordinator for the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS 2016 and ICCS 2022) and served as the head of the scientific advisory board to the German Federal Agency for Citizenship Education (BpB 2018-2023). In the framework of the pilot program “living democracy” (German Ministry of Education and Youth) he is leading a team for the evaluation of innovative interventions on the prevention of hate speech, resilience building against disinformation and strengthening participation (2025-2028).

NEW CHALLENGES IN DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

How does the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS 2027) adapt?

In the first chapter, the contribution summarises how the perspective on digital citizenship has changed since the beginning of the century.

While there was an overly positive perspective on new opportunities for participation online during the first decade, the second decade was characterised by a higher awareness for challenges to the individual citizen and democracy. Now in the third decade the growing potential of AI has led to a perspective of increased vigilance on the competence needs for digital citizenship. The second chapter shortly introduces the scope of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS 2027). The contribution reflects on how the development of the digital space leads to innovative measurements. New ideas for questionnaire instruments concern students, teachers and school principals as participants in the survey. Selective instruments that are now being prepared for the field trail are roughly sketched.

KEY WORDS

digital citizenship literacy, international survey,
secondary school education, large scale assessment



How Journalism and Media Literacy Can Work Together to Create Digital Citizens. Who Will Help Democracy Survive?

Aralynn Abare McMane

Executive Director of Global Youth & News Media

France

The Global Youth & News Media is a France-based international nonprofit dedicated to developing and reinforcing strategies that help the young and news media better engage for mutual benefit and for the good of democracy.

Journalists and media literacy practitioners can cooperate in multiple ways to support the children and youth they serve in a digital world. This cooperation starts with aligning all core media literacy standards and frameworks to include core lessons on the necessary role of journalism in a democracy and on the need to defend journalists against the too often horrific dangers they face, as the Council of Europe has done. Other approaches include using journalism as a prism for other learning, meeting journalists in meaningful encounters, doing journalism oneself and having access to quality journalism starting at a very young age.

KEY WORDS

media literacy, journalistic learning, youth journalism



FROM TRAINING TO IMPACT

Jerónimo Bernal López

Education Advisor at the National Institute of Educational Technology and Teacher Training (INTEF)

Spain

Spain's Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports. Holds a BA in English Philology and a degree in Primary English Teaching, with over 18 years of experience in primary, secondary, and higher education (University of Murcia).

Media & Information Literacy through Digital Citizenship Education in Spain

Spain's approach to Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) integrates large-scale teacher training, family engagement, and a broad school innovation strategy to embed Media & Information Literacy (MIL) in everyday learning. Through MOOCs, NOOCs, and SPOOCs, over 604,400 teachers have been accredited in digital competence, while family programmes co-designed with national agencies address online safety and digital learning. School innovation is promoted through multiple initiatives, including eTwinning projects and the national contest "Internet Takes Education to the Clouds", as examples of pioneering practices. This comprehensive approach has led to a culture shift towards active, responsible, and creative digital participation, positioning Spain as a European reference in DCE and MIL. Open resources and models are available for teachers, families, students, policy makers, and school leaders.

KEY WORDS

digital citizenship education, media and information literacy, teacher training, family engagement, school innovation





Mateja Rek

Sociologist and
communication scholar

Slovenia

Full professor at the Faculty of Information Studies in Novo Mesto and the Faculty of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica. Prof. Rek leads projects exploring digital media literacy, including the long running Infrastructure Program for collecting data on media literacy in Slovenia and has coordinated EU funded initiatives on digital citizenship and media literacy.

KEY WORDS

youth, media education,
media literacy, digital
citizenship, critical
thinking

NARRATIVES OF YOUTH

Rethinking Media Education for Digital Citizenship

Understanding young people's experiences with digital media education is essential for fostering digital citizenship, as their perspectives highlight opportunities to rethink how education supports responsible online participation. In today's rapidly evolving digital environment, young people navigate complex information ecosystems shaped by AI, algorithms, cross-platform content and shifting communication norms. Their experiences reveal gaps between current digital media education practices and the realities of growing up in a digitally saturated world. Parents, schools, peers and the media industry influence their media literacy in diverse ways, reflecting wide variations in digital habits, skills and expectations. These insights suggest that digital media education should move beyond isolated skill-building to foster ongoing dialogue, critical understanding and practical, real-world competencies for responsible online participation. Young people's viewpoints indicate that digital media education works best when it's continuous, adaptable and interactive, building the foundation for responsible and thoughtful participation online.



Carlos Pinheiro

School Librarian at the Leal da
Câmara School Cluster and History
teacher

Portugal

Holds a PhD in Communication Sciences. Inter-municipal Coordinator of the School Libraries Network. Teacher trainer in the fields of Educational Technologies, Artificial Intelligence, and School Libraries.

KEY WORDS

digital literacy,
media literacy



Media Literacy Kit

The Media Literacy Kit comprises ten learning modules delivered by the School Library for students from the 10th to the 12th grades, each lasting between 90 and 135 minutes. The modules address key areas such as disinformation, digital communication, information literacy, online well-being, video production, media language, film literacy, AI literacy, copyright, and digital consumerism. Classes may enrol in one to three modules per year, and student groups may also request sessions to be held in the School Library. To illustrate the kit's practical application, an example is presented of a student project combining modules on Information Literacy and Video Creation. The task involved researching an endangered species and producing a short video through a structured process including topic selection, information gathering, scriptwriting, storyboarding, media recording, editing, and peer review. The final product functions as a short awareness campaign encouraging informed and responsible engagement with environmental issues.

Pascale Raulin-Serrier

International Relations Officer in
public awareness activities for
the French CNIL (Data Protection
Authority).

France

Ms Raulin-Serrier has been leading for long the Digital Education Working Group (DEWG) comprised of 90 Data Protection Authorities worldwide within the Global Privacy Assembly. She also works as a member of the Council of Europe's expert group on Digital Citizenship Education.

KEY WORDS

digital literacy, digital
parenting, sharenting,
privacy, children's rights

Challenges and problem areas to advance digital citizenship education to parents by data protection authorities

Considering that parents are currently being influenced by obvious worries about 'screen-time', 'internet addiction' and 'stranger danger', the group of DPAs addressed the issue of digital literacy and online safety as a global concern. The final purpose was to define joint messages and appropriate media that will best reach parents to foster family co-usage related to early digital literacy. Building on a survey assessing parents' concerns, two DPAs considered it important to raise awareness with producing a common impactful video clip about the practice of "sharenting", that is proving harmful to children's rights and well-being. Every time a parent posts the child's life online; they are sharing the child's personal data to the world. The campaign "Always Pause Before You Post" can be replicated by organisations by using subtitles.





Giuseppina Russo

Unit Mission for National Recovery and Resilience Plan in the Ministry of Education and Merit
Italy

Joined the Italian Ministry of Education and Merit in 2022 within the Mission Unit implementing the NRRP digitalisation strategy for schools. Responsible for international projects on digital transformation and AI in education, and member of the National Authority for Erasmus+ and eTwinning. Digital Citizenship Education promoter for the Council of Europe and member of the European Commission's WG DELTA.

Digital Citizen in the age of AI

Over the past year, within the PNRR activities and training programme Italy has strengthened its commitment to Digital Citizenship Education (DCE), recognising its deep interconnection with Artificial Intelligence literacy. As AI reshapes communication, learning, and democratic participation, DCE provides the ethical and conceptual foundation needed to ensure a human-centred and responsible integration of intelligent technologies into education. Within the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education and the Scuola Futura training programme, Italy has launched a national initiative based on the Council of Europe's 10 DCE domains. The programme includes three phases – Inform and Teach, Participate and Support, Share and Document – and offers open access to lesson plans, best practices, and a national map of participating schools. A new AI-enhanced section will help teachers adapt and enrich DCE materials using AI tools. To strengthen trust and engagement, expert teachers support schools through physical and virtual laboratories, fostering collaboration, innovation, and active student participation.

KEY WORDS

digital citizenship, AI in education, teacher training, student empowerment, knowledge sharing





Gabriel Brezoiu

General Manager, GEYC & Founder,
PRISMA European Network

Romania

Mr Brezoiu is a Romanian trainer and project manager with 15+ years of experience in youth work, digital citizenship and democracy. He co-founded GEYC, initiated the PRISMA European Network and created the GEYC Community in 2010, an early European model for digital youth engagement.

Lina Boicu

Community Engagement Assistant

Romania

Ms Boicu is a youth worker originally from Moldova passionate about civic participation and community development. Active since 2019 in Romania and Moldova, she graduated International Relations in Cluj-Napoca and joined GEYC in 2023. As Community Engagement Assistant, she coordinated the outreach, visibility and local mobilisation during EDCE Week 2025, bringing a youth perspective to digital citizenship education.

FROM LOCAL ACTION TO EUROPEAN IMPACT

Lessons learned from the European Digital Citizenship Education Week 2025

The European Digital Citizenship Education Week 2025 (#EDCEWeek25), coordinated by PRISMA European Network and GEYC (15-21 Sept 2025), brought together 85 local events in 15 countries to strengthen media literacy, online well-being, digital rights and participation & inclusion. A Training of Trainers ("Digital Bridges", 1-7 Sept, Bucharest) prepared 30 multipliers from 12 countries; two support webinars and a central resource centre sustained local coordinators. The campaign reached 3,802 direct participants (65% teenagers), achieved an aggregated online reach of 179,076, and built durable local-European partnerships. Results show strong appetite for hands-on workshops and peer-to-peer formats, while gaps remain in teacher preparedness, infrastructure and family engagement. We recommend institutionalising EDCE Week annually, investing in ongoing teacher training and accessible resource toolkits to scale local practice into systemic change.

KEY WORDS

digital citizenship education,
media literacy, online well-
being, youth empowerment,
capacity building



Silvia Bogdan

President of the Association Școala de Valori/The School of Values (Romania) and the head of the research department
Romania

Her professional trajectory ingeniously combines practical experience in aeronautical engineering, entrepreneurship in modern commerce, human resource management, training and consulting in education, delivery and creation of educational content for youth (7-27 years old) and preuniversity teachers, as well as research in the field of informal and non-formal education.

Natalia-Maria Duruş

PhD in educational sciences at
INALCO (Institut national des
langues et civilisations orientales)
Alliance Sorbonne, France
Romania

Her priorities within the Association Școala de Valori/The School of Values are the collection and qualitative analysis of classroom and outside-the-formal-environment data, as well as the publication of research results for the target public (teachers, trainers, academics).



DIGITAL CIVIC INCUBATOR

How the Digital Civic Incubator Transforms Schools into Democratic, Innovative and AI-Ethical Ecosystems

The Digital Civic Incubator (DCI) is a national whole-school transformation initiative developed in Romania, designed to empower schools to become democratic, innovative and AI-ethical learning ecosystems. Aligned with the Council of Europe's Digital Citizenship Education Road Map (2027-2031), DCI integrates three interdependent dimensions-Democratic School Culture, Innovative Pedagogies, and Ethical Digital & AI Literacy-into a coherent Theory of Change applied across 38 schools and several trained thousand students and teachers. Through participatory governance, metacognitive and multimodal learning practices, communities of professional inquiry, and co-created AI ethics protocols, DCI operationalizes the principles of RFDCD, DCE, and Human Rights & Safeguards by Design. The initiative demonstrates how Digital Citizenship Education can shift from policy to practice, using interaction-based research and collaborative design to build resilient, rights-based digital environments for young people. The model provides a scalable European example of how schools can embody democratic culture while integrating AI responsibly and ethically.

KEY WORDS

digital citizenship education, democratic school culture, whole-school approach, AI ethics, AI literacy, student agency, innovative pedagogies, metacognition, human rights education, digital well-being, evidence-based practice, school transformation

Björn Bachmann

Senior Project Manager at the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Germany

Working on the implementation of the EDEH framework service contract with the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Additionally, he has extensive experience as a trained facilitator in face-to-face workshops and online webinars.

KEY WORDS

digital education, European digital education hub (EDEH), community of practice, European education policy, cross-sectoral



COLLABORATION FOR DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Insights from the European Digital Education Hub

The European Digital Education Hub (EDEH) is a Europe-wide community of practice consisting of more than 7,500 educators, policymakers, researchers, and practitioners. This project offers a unique space for collaboration and knowledge exchange to overcome fragmentation in digital education in Europe. The Digital Citizenship Education working group (a so-called squad) is currently developing an awareness-raising kit to assist educators in fostering digital citizenship. Important steps in the development were facilitated by an in-person design-thinking workshop in September 2025 in Warsaw. There, Hub members created and explored practical ideas. The presentation highlights key activities of the Hub, presents various opportunities to get involved and demonstrates how the EDEH encourages stakeholders across Europe to work collaboratively in shaping the future of digital learning and citizenship.

Sonja Merljak Zdovc

Journalist, editor, and founder of Časoris*
Slovenia

She has long championed the importance of trustworthy, age-appropriate news that helps young audiences understand the world and cope with pressures intensified by social media. She is involved in several international initiatives, including YoCoJoin, Media Masters, and Mediawise, as well as other CERV, Creative Europe, and Erasmus+ projects.

* Slovenia's only online newspaper for children, as well as a co-founder of Children's News Europe

KEY WORDS

news media literacy, critical thinking, quality information, democracy, resilience

FROM TIKTOK TO TRUST

Digital Citizenship Education Through News Literacy

This contribution examines the news media habits of Slovenian youth and highlights why fostering a healthy news media diet is essential for digital citizenship education. Recent data show that 42.5% of pupils follow news daily via social media, while 39.5% rely on peers; only 14.6% access news daily through traditional media, and 52.4% never read online newspapers. At the same time, 70.7% have encountered false or misleading news, yet only 19% always verify such information. Awareness of deepfakes remains limited - 32% have heard of them, though 79% of those believe they have seen one. These findings indicate that young people are highly exposed to disinformation but often lack verification skills. The presentation argues that digital citizenship education must emphasise critical thinking, diverse and reliable news sources, and the value of quality journalism. Drawing on the case of Časoris, it illustrates how age-appropriate, trustworthy news can strengthen democratic resilience.



Alessandro Soriani

PhD, Associate Professor of Special Education and Pedagogy (PAED-02/A) at the Department of Education Sciences of the University of Bologna

Italy

Mr Soriani works as a trainer, facilitator and consultant for various governmental and non-governmental organisations at national and international level (including Department of Education and Culture of San Marino, French Ministry of Education). Since 2016, he has been a pedagogical consultant and expert consultant for the Council of Europe for the Digital Citizenship Education project.

PIXELMEDIA

A Videogame to Develop Media Literacy

Pixel Media is a Creative Europe initiative using video games to develop media literacy among Europeans aged 16-30. As democracies face misinformation and algorithmic polarisation, this project shifts from traditional teaching toward immersive learning in digital environments young people naturally inhabit.

Six partners across Italy, Bulgaria, Belgium, Serbia, Spain, and France collaborate to address diverse European media contexts. The educational game lets players practice identifying misinformation, evaluating sources, and recognizing manipulation in safe environments where errors facilitate learning. Comprehensive pedagogical resources support educators with facilitation guides and assessment tools.

Drawing from media studies, educational psychology, and game-based learning research, Pixel Media recognizes that digital citizenship requires active critical engagement, not passive awareness. Gamification transforms learners into active knowledge participants, surpassing traditional methods that fail to change digital natives' behaviour.

This analysis examines Pixel Media's methodology, cross-border collaboration, and contributions to digital citizenship education for educators, policymakers, and researchers building European media literacy capacity.

KEY WORDS

Media literacy, video game, creative Europe project, informal education, secondary education



SESSION II –

Well-being Online: Health and Well-being

Arpiné Grigoryan

Head of Digital Operations at APRI
Armenia

Digital literacy trainer, systems thinker, and cybersecurity educator with more than twenty years of experience helping individuals and organisations navigate the evolving digital landscape. She is Head of Digital Operations at APRI Armenia, where she leads digital infrastructure, internal policies, and contributes to technology-related projects. As an independent trainer and consultant, she has designed and delivered dozens of programs on digital literacy, online safety, collaboration tools, and emerging technologies for NGOs, educators, youth, and underserved communities.

Digital Literacy for Parents

Parents in Armenia, as well as those worldwide, are facing increasing challenges in guiding their children’s digital lives as schools rapidly adopt new technologies. Drawing on personal experience as a cybersecurity and digital literacy expert and parent, and on practical work with families in Armenia, this contribution highlights three key dimensions of modern digital parenting: setting healthy boundaries around technology use, navigating parental control tools that are often either overly complex or too restrictive, and bridging the growing mismatch between school-driven digital transformation and parents’ ability to support it at home. The presentation introduces Armenia’s Digital Parenting Workshops and a forthcoming Practical Guide, accompanied by a digital companion platform, designed to provide parents with accessible, continuously updated resources. By empowering families with digital literacy tools and clear guidance, the initiative aims to shift parents from reactive supervision toward proactive digital mentorship, strengthening digital citizenship education both in schools and at home.

KEY WORDS

digital literacy, digital parenting,
digital tools in education,
interactive tools



Yveline Chard-Henry

Deputy Director of the Observatory
for combating harassment and
digital violence against minors
attached to the association
e-Enfance

France

Ms Chard-Henry has a long career within the French prison administration, serving in several positions as Director of Prison Services. She later joined the Ministry of the Interior where she worked as Head of the Cooperation Office within the Strategy Department of the National Department for the Protection of Children, part of the National Judicial Police Directorate.

KEY WORDS

Well-being of children
in digital environment

E-ENFANCE ASSOCIATION

The creation of the Observatory for Combating Harassment and Digital Violence Against Minors

The presentation outlines the mission and recent developments of e-Enfance, the French public-utility association dedicated to protecting minors from harassment and digital violence. It highlights the central role of the 3018 helpline, a free, anonymous and confidential service providing psychological, legal and educational assistance available seven days a week across multiple channels. Recognised since November 2024 as a Trusted Flagger under the Digital Services Act, e-Enfance benefits from priority reporting mechanisms with all platforms covered by the regulation. The analysis of more than 160,000 cases in 2024 and findings from the e-Enfance 2025 Barometer show a sharp deterioration in minors’ well-being with increasing exposure to cyberbullying, sextortion, harmful content and suicidal thoughts.





Barbara Brečko

Research Associate and the Chair of the Centre for Social Informatics at the Faculty of Social Sciences University of Ljubljana Slovenia

She has extensive experience in international educational studies (TIMSS, PIRLS, SITES, ICILS, PISA) and previously worked at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (IPTS) in Seville, where she contributed to the development of the DIGCOMP framework for digital competence. Barbara is actively involved in projects addressing cyber violence and digital safety (e.g., CYBERVAW, CYBERSAFE, Cybersafe MOOC).



KEY WORDS

cyber violence, survey, perpetrators, victims

BUILDING SAFER DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

Risk Factors and Responses to Online Violence

Digital technology is firmly embedded in the everyday lives of young people. Smartphones, apps and platforms are now the main spaces where they socialise, learn, relax and explore who they are. Snapchat streaks, TikTok trends, YouTube videos and Instagram stories are not just entertainment; they are part of how friendships are formed, how conflicts unfold and how young people present themselves to the world.

Yet alongside creativity, connection and fun, the digital environment also brings risk. Exposure to violent or sexual content, excessive gaming and, above all, cyberviolence are becoming central concerns for parents, schools and young people themselves.

The Digi.dr survey, conducted from March to May 2025 in 63 primary and secondary schools, sheds light on these issues. Almost 3,000 pupils aged 12 to 19 took part. The research examined their use of digital devices and social media, their exposure to inappropriate or harmful content, their media literacy and online well-being, and their experiences with different forms of cyberviolence.



The Role of Professional Networks in Empowering History and Civic Education Teachers for Digital Citizenship Education

Mirela Sakej

History, civic, geography teacher
Albania

History, civic, geography teacher with 17 years of professional experience in secondary and lower secondary education in Shkoder, Albania. Ms Sakej holds a Master of Science in Regional Study and has completed advanced training programs at national and international levels. She is the founder and coordinator of professional network for history and civic education, and the use of alternative historical sources in teaching.



The presentation explores how professional teacher networks function as key mechanisms to implement Digital Citizenship Education in meaningful and sustainable ways. The contribution is grounded on the Council of Europe Draft Road Map for Strengthening Digital Citizenship Education (2027-2031) with particular focus on Strategic Objective 3 which emphasizes education, training and teacher capacity building.

Adopting a qualitative and practice-based perspective, the presentation draws on the presenter's professional experience as an upper secondary History and Civic Education teacher and as coordinator of a professional teachers' network. While European and international institutions have developed detailed and well-structured strategies for promoting digital citizenship, the presentation argues that teachers remain the decisive factor for successful implementation. Policies and frameworks can only achieve their intended outcomes if teachers are adequately prepared, supported and empowered to translate them into classroom practice. Without this key element even the most comprehensive strategies risk remaining theoretical and fragmented.

KEY WORDS

digital citizenship education, 21st century skills, Artificial Intelligence, professional teacher networks, Council of Europe Draft Road Map (2027–2031)



Proposed cultural norms for the use of digital devices for the benefit of children and the current use of phones and social networks among young people in Slovenia in 2025

Janez Krek

Professor of Philosophy of Education, University of Ljubljana Faculty of Education, Slovenia & Strengthening Digital Citizenship in Slovenian Educational Institutions (DIGI.DR) project leader

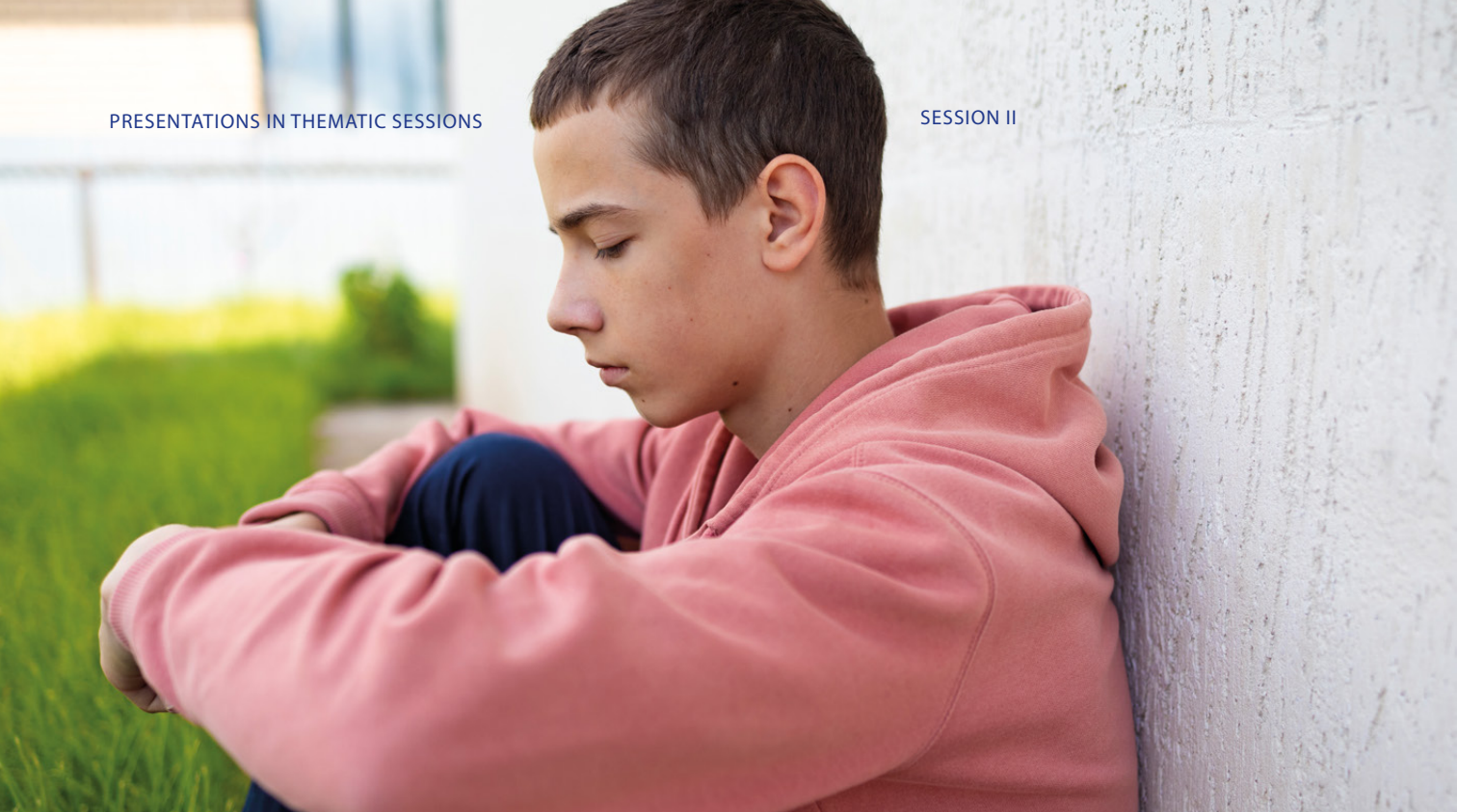
Slovenia



In the presentation three proposals of “new” cultural norms are compared for the use of personal digital devices in schools and in personal life of young generations with the data on their use in Slovenia in 2025. Firstly, students need schools without personal digital devices (such as phones, watches, etc.). Secondly, society and parents should allow children and young people to grow up without social networks before the age of 16. Thirdly, society and parents should adopt a rule that children and young people should not have smartphones before high school, only basic phones with limited apps and no internet browser. From empirical data it can be assumed that schools in Slovenia can quickly enforce the first rule if they choose to do so. The second and third cultural norms are in stark contrast to current customs and require legislative and parental support and a change in societal beliefs to enforce them.

KEY WORDS

well-being, cultural norms, use of personal digital devices, social networks, empirical research data



Dragana Babić

President of a digital learning centre
Bosnia and Herzegovina

Leading programmes that expand access to inclusive, creative, and sustainable digital education for children and young people. Ms Babić’s work has contributed to some of the earliest structured efforts in her country to introduce digital citizenship, AI-enhanced learning, and low-resource innovation, particularly for learners growing up in vulnerable circumstances.



KEY WORDS

inclusive digital learning, recognition and belonging, digital literacy, competence development pathways, trauma-informed practice

INCLUSIVE DIGITAL EDUCATION

Creating Real Impact for Vulnerable Youth

The presentation introduces a practice-based model of inclusive digital citizenship education developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where no national digital well-being or DCE policy currently exists. Implemented within a day centre for children affected by neglect and abuse, the intervention used free AI and interactive tools to establish a low-threshold entry point into digital learning.

Analysis of the implementation highlights three core conditions for impact: emotional safety, playful engagement, and sustained recognition of learner potential. The clearest indicator of effectiveness was the advancement of one participant into a regular IT education programme, a transition that functioned as both a personal breakthrough and evidence of the model’s relevance. The case demonstrates how targeted, small-scale initiatives can operationalise European DCE principles in vulnerable contexts and contribute meaningfully to inclusion, even in the absence of systemic policy infrastructure.

Jose Luis Martinez Garcia

Inspector of Education at the Department of Education of the Castilla-La Mancha Region
Spain

With extensive experience in educational administration and policy development, he specializes in school coexistence, digital citizenship, and cyberbullying prevention. His role encompasses direct school support, policy development, and oversight of compliance with prevention protocols. As an education inspector, he advises schools on implementing effective prevention programs and monitors the effectiveness of anti-bullying measures.

KEY WORDS

cyberbullying prevention, digital citizenship education, school safety protocols, online safety, peer support programs



Measures to Prevent Cyberbullying at Schools

The presentation addresses comprehensive institutional and school-based measures to prevent cyberbullying in educational settings, aligned with the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025. The intervention emphasizes that digital citizenship requires treating the online world as an extension of reality, where student actions, behaviours, and words must reflect their values in physical spaces. Prevention requires coordinated action at multiple levels: institutional support through policy frameworks, direct school-based interventions, and collaborative partnerships with external stakeholders. The presentation showcases evidence-based initiatives from Castilla-La Mancha, including mandatory bullying prevention protocols, the “Tú Cuentas” (You Tell Us) helpline, educational counsellor support, and police-school collaboration through Plan Director. School-based measures include tutorial activities, peer support programs (Cyber Helpers), and coordinated educational counsellor interventions. The comprehensive approach combines policy, resources, training, and direct student support.

Sophie Reimers

Phd in Cultural Anthropology, working as a consultant for Youth media protection at NGO AKJS e.V. in Potsdam
Germany

KEY WORDS

media education, kindergarten, parents support, toolbox, media literacy

Engaging Parents in Media Education with the Eduskills+Media Toolbox

The workshop involved the presentation of the project Eduskills+Media Toolbox. The toolbox was created to foster cooperation between educators and families while promoting media competences, critical thinking, and balanced screen use. It offers teachers clear information, ready-to-use methods, reflection questions for team discussions, and downloadable materials. These tools support teachers in integrating media education into everyday practice and in engaging parents, whose attitudes and habits strongly influence their children’s media skills. The aim is to create positive, shared learning experiences for children and parents and to build a sustainable foundation for future digital literacy.



Jure Plaskan

Researcher at the Centre for Social Informatics, University of Ljubljana
Slovenia

KEY WORDS

risky internet use, well-being, inappropriate content online



RISKY TECHNOLOGY USE

Comparing Perspectives of Children and Parents as A Challenge for Digital Citizenship

The presentation reveals findings from a comparative study on risky digital technology use among students in Slovenia (ages 13-17) and parents of children of the same age. The study draws on multiple survey waves and questionnaire comparisons. The results reveal a significant perception gap: parents underestimate negative influences and experiences their children face on social media and the internet. Children commonly report feeling negative pressures relating to their appearance, comparisons to influencers and other peers, and a sense of being overwhelmed by online content. According to the results, this is heavily underestimated by parents. The study highlights the importance of bridging the perception gap between parents and children in order to foster a safer, healthier, and more responsible digital environment. The study has its limitations, as it draws data from different surveys that are harder to compare. As such, it can be considered a starting point for further research.

Whitney Gray

Youth Engagement Coordinator at the Digital Transformations for Health Lab
Switzerland

Ms Gray has a degree in pre-medical biology and medical ethics and holds two Masters degrees in Public Health and International Affairs. Ms Gray's experience includes biomedical research, health systems strengthening, global health governance and civil society engagement. With a longstanding desire to advance the health and well-being of all, she works to improve the inclusivity of actors in the design and implementation of research, policy and solutions for health.

Embedding Health in Digital Citizenship Education for Young People

Digital citizenship for health extends the notions of digital citizenship to the health domain. Health is not just the absence of illness or something that happens only in clinics – it's shaped continuously in everyday life. The digital world is a new sphere in which health is created and so it is critical that actors from all sectors, including education, can collaborate in supporting young people to be safe and healthy in digital environments. Equitable health benefits can only be gained from digital transformations when all people critically engage with digital information and platforms and actively participate in their governance. By equipping young people with the necessary skills and capacity they can become empowered digital citizens for health and future changemakers.

KEY WORDS

youth, digital well-being, health, digital citizenship education



SESSION III –

Rights Online

ADVANCING DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

From AI-Driven Learning Systems to Open Knowledge Access

In higher education, digital citizens must be addressed in an integrated manner that assimilates technological innovation and responsibility for open and accessible knowledge. We propose an integrated approach tailored at the University of Tetova that couples artificial intelligence-based learning systems and open-source infrastructure for academic research in order to enhance digital citizens' competencies. Based on three thematic axes of research: artificial intelligence personalisation in the Blazor LMS system, assessment of student-centred approaches towards artificial intelligence, and the use of the RARS platform for open academic collaboration, this paper shows that adaptive learning practices and transparent and accessible access create better-informed digital citizens for higher education. Overall, this paper asserts that this tailored approach at the University of Tetova provides an accessible scalable template that aligns higher ed technological innovation in accordance with the Council of Europe Framework on Digital Citizenship Education.

KEY WORDS

digital citizenship, RARS platform, AI-driven learning systems, Blazor



Agon Memeti

Associate Professor of Computer Science at the University of Tetova
North Macedonia

His research focuses on artificial intelligence in education, digital learning systems, open science infrastructures, and software engineering. He has led several institutional digital transformation initiatives and is an Expert Member of the European Universities Association's Innovation Group.

Ibrahim Neziri

Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Tetova
North Macedonia

His work explores educational psychology, student motivation, digital well-being, and the psychological dimensions of technology-enhanced learning. He contributes to interdisciplinary projects linking pedagogy, digital citizenship, and learner behaviour.

Artina Kamberi

PhD Candidate in Public Finance at the Faculty of Economics - SEEU, also a Researcher at University of Tetova
North Macedonia

Her research focuses on digital literacy, youth participation in digital environments, and the socioeconomic dimensions of AI-supported learning. She is actively involved in projects on digital citizenship, open knowledge access, and evidence-based education policy.

Roxana
Morduchowicz

PhD on Communication at the
University of Paris
Argentina

Senior Consultant at UNESCO for the
program Digital Citizenship as a public
policy in education in Latin America.
Author of several books, the last one:
Educate in the era of AI (2024).

KEY WORDS

democracy, digital
citizenship education



How Can Digital Citizenship Education
Reinforce Democracy?

In the 21st century education faces significant challenges: teaching how to find reliable information and avoid false content; promoting pluralism and diversity against hate speech; teaching the risks of biased algorithms that affect our decisions and analyzing the unethical uses of artificial intelligence in relation to the generation of false results and the use of private data. Misinformation, hate speech, digital bubbles - among other problems generated by unethical design of technologies - undermine democracy.

This is what digital citizenship education is about. DCE is fundamental to democracy. It is difficult to think of a strong democratic culture without a society that exercises digital citizenship. DCE empowers students to participate in the construction of public policies that strength democracy.

DCE promotes social inclusion. Lack of access to and appropriation of technologies deepens exclusion. Lack of competences to critically use them, deepens digital gaps. This paper will develop why and how DCE can reinforce democracy.

DIGITAL DOESN'T MEAN IMPERSONAL

How Digital Tools Help Citizens
Participate in Democracy

Increasing participation has never been more difficult even though there have never been more tools to do so. This talk explores the “how” and “why” digitalisation matters for marginalized citizens through Estonia’s experience.

KEY WORDS

democracy, inclusion, public education



Rannar Park

Head of Business Management in
e-Estonia Briefing Centre
Estonia

Mr Park aims to connect entrepreneurs
and state entities to foster cross-borders
innovation, international business
relations and make sure the gospel of
e-Estonia is heard in every corner of the
world.



Maja Vreča

Working at the Academic and
Research Network of Slovenia
(ARNES) since 1995
Slovenia

Ms Vreča was Head of User Support for many
years, but in recent years, she specialised in
issues concerning safer internet use. In her
role as an associate at the Slovenian Safer
Internet Awareness Node, she lectures to
a wide range of audiences: from people
with special needs to general public, from
primary school pupils to parents and
teachers, from students to researchers.

Where is the lever?

An informed digital citizen is one of the key goals of digital citizenship education. Protecting privacy on the Internet plays a key role in this, as it significantly reduces our exposure to targeted disinformation and protects us from other problems – like scams for instance. However, protecting our online privacy is made much more difficult by the addictive design of technologies and other dark patterns. Changing behaviour and habits requires a serious decision, which does not happen without deep motivation.

KEY WORDS

media literacy, online privacy, well-
being, big data, comfort zone





Janice Richardson

Researcher, author and lecturer on the digital transformation in education
Luxembourg

She advises governments and institutions (Council of Europe, UNESCO, European Commission) in Europe and Africa, and sits on various advisory councils for Meta and Snapchat. Ms Richardson was previously coordinator of the EU-funded 31-country Insafe network and the ENABLE anti-bullying project, and is the founder of Safer Internet Day.

Early Childhood Education with Digi-Nauts

The presentation showcased early childhood learning material developed by the Council of Europe’s Education Department for the education sector as well as for parents and carers to help raise responsible and informed digital citizens. The material includes 4 Digi-Nauts episodes relating to domains of the Council of Europe’s digital citizenship education concept, as well as situation cards, activity books, guides and leaflets to educate about digital citizenship in a playful and enjoyable manner.

KEY WORDS

privacy, security, password



FROM CONSUMERS TO CREATORS

Empowering Rural Kids with Mobile-First Coding

Olga Vlouchaki

Principal & Senior Project Manager,
Scientific Advisor for Digital Learning
Greece

Education and innovation professional with extensive experience in digital learning, cultural projects, and international cooperation. She has worked across Europe supporting initiatives in lifelong learning, digital transformation, and inclusive education. Her work combines creativity, strategic communication, and a commitment to equity, helping organisations design meaningful educational experiences and promote social impact through technology and culture.

KEY WORDS

digital inclusion, creative coding, mobile-first learning, rural education, digital citizenship

The summer school created a transformative experience for children in a rural village, who often have limited access to computers or structured digital education. By using only their mobile phones and OctoStudio, they discovered that technology can be a tool for creativity, self-expression, and collaboration.

Children who had previously used phones mainly for entertainment became active creators, designing animations, games, and stories. This shift not only built new skills in programming and problem-solving but also nurtured confidence and pride in their own abilities. Working together, they learned to share knowledge, help one another, and celebrate each other’s successes. This change in perception helped strengthen trust in digital education and highlighted the importance of giving rural kids opportunities to participate fully in the digital world.

By fostering inclusion, creativity, and agency, this initiative shows how even modest resources can make a big difference in building digital citizenship and bridging the rural-urban divide.



The Road Map for Strengthening Digital Citizenship Education 2027-2031

The rapid advancement of digital technologies, while offering many positive opportunities, has also brought about complex challenges, as detailed in the Secretary General's 2025 report "Towards A New Democratic Pact for Europe". These include unprecedented threats to democracy, widespread disinformation, hate speech, societal polarisation and a crisis of trust in democratic institutions.

Digital citizenship offers a crucial opportunity to counter this trend through fostering active and responsible civic engagement, both on and offline, strengthening democratic values and a human-centred approach in the digital sphere, while empowering citizens to be more critically aware and resilient.

A coordinated, structured Road Map for Strengthening DCE across member states is needed at this juncture to build on the momentum of the Council of Europe's leading role in the promotion of DCE since 2016, culminating in European Year 2025, and to re-position it effectively in response to the Secretary General's Call for a New Democratic Pact. DCE is included under the "Learning and Practising Democracy" pillar of the New Democratic Pact. This emphasises the importance of prioritising youth participation in democracy, investing in civic education, including digital and media literacy. This investment is seen as vital for countering polarisation and disengagement among young people and for promoting critical thinking and civic participation in the digital age.

The Road Map for Strengthening Digital Citizenship Education (2027 – 2031) is a five-year plan of policy initiatives and programmatic activities that seek to empower learners across Council of Europe member states as active, responsible, and ethical digital citizens.

In terms of scope, the Road map will seek to engage government actors, policymakers, educational professionals, civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders with reference to digital citizenship education policy and practice across formal and non-formal education sectors across all Council of Europe member states.

The Road map seeks to complement and extend rather than compete with existing policies and frameworks such as the EU's Digital Education Action Plan to ensure that there is no duplication of effort or overloading of educators and policy makers in implementing digital citizenship education.

The Road map will ensure that its policies and resources are accessible to all citizens, including vulnerable communities, thereby directly promoting equity and true digital inclusion.

The document will encompass measures to initiate and support policy development, capacity expansion, consolidation of existing and newly introduced activities, impact assessment and future proofing. Proposed activities will include short-, medium-, and long-term planning horizons.

Road Map Outline

The Road map is organised around the following four headings, which define its strategic objectives and main outcomes:

01 POLICY ADVANCEMENT FOR DCE

Member states adopt and implement a common DCE framework based on European principles and aligned to the European Space of Citizenship Education that is sustainable, adaptable, and resilient to future digital challenges.

02 COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

Member states have high profile awareness events in place, such as the Education for Digital Citizenship Week in place, Council of Europe DCE award, held annually. A DCE Advisory Group reporting to CDEDU provides strategic guidance.

03 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Member states embed DCE in all formal, non-formal and lifelong learning cycles with the DCE Planner widely used as a main tool. Relevant competence frameworks are updated to anticipate emerging technologies and support future-proofed education.

04 LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Member states have secure digital learning environments in place to support DCE and promote innovation in learning. Platforms for sharing best practices are widely populated and used.

More information on the guiding principles, key enabling factors and the timeline of the road map implementation are available in the presentation by Villano Qiriazzi entitled “Framing the Future: The DCE Road Map”.



General Report of the Closing Conference



Vitor Tomé

GENERAL RAPPORTEUR

The “Way Forward” conference, held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 18-19 November 2025, served as the capstone event for the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025. Co-hosted by the Council of Europe and the Slovenian Ministry of Education, this significant gathering brought together 180 key stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, researchers, and civil society representatives, to reflect on a pivotal year of progress and collaboration.

The conference marked a crucial transition, moving from foundational work to a phase of coordinated, impactful action across Europe. This renewed effort is viewed as a vital force for democratic renewal, specifically by empowering learners to become active, responsible, and ethical digital citizens. The consensus and strategic direction achieved at the event directly inform the development of the Council of Europe Road Map for Strengthening Digital Citizenship Education (2027-2031).

This report synthesises the key insights, innovative strategies, and validated conclusions resulting from the Ljubljana conference. It successfully captures the spirit of collaborative problem-solving that defined the

discussions and workshops, shifting the focus from high-level principles to practical, on-the-ground solutions necessary for advancing DCE across the continent.

The DCE Road Map 2027-2031 is introduced as the core strategic framework designed to address existing challenges and establish the necessary conditions to face current challenges and overcome barriers. These proposals detail the Road map's structure and implementation across four key areas: Actions and reporting mechanisms, Communication strategies, Identification of partners and resources, and Evaluation of the Road map implementation.

Identified Challenges

This section synthesises the key contextual and pedagogical challenges that impede the full and effective implementation of Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) in member states. Conference discussions revealed a consensus that these challenges are not isolated but form an interconnected ecosystem of pressures. Understanding this broader context is the first step in formulating effective educational strategies.

Contextual challenges

Contextual challenges represent the complex digital ecosystem that Digital Citizenship Education must address. This environment is characterized by a wide spectrum of issues, from sophisticated information warfare campaigns that threaten democratic processes to the subtle but profound psychological impacts of platform design on individual well-being.

PLATFORM DRIVEN AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

01 The “attention economy” is a business model where digital platforms are engineered to maximise user engagement. Platform designs (such as infinite scroll, autoplay, and notifications) are deliberate strategies that exploit young people’s developing focus and self-regulation for profit, turning human attention into a core commodity.

02 Algorithms profoundly shape user perceptions, creating “digital bubbles” that reinforce existing beliefs and severely limit exposure to diverse viewpoints. This can have serious consequences, as the inability AI to fully understand context can lead to the inappropriate censorship of historically or socially significant content.

03 This hyper-connected environment creates a profound struggle for balance, defined by the tension between connection and distraction, sharing and oversharing, and self-expression versus self-control. This constant negotiation blurs the boundaries between public and private life, increasing emotional vulnerability. Despite constant connection, there is an alarming increase in loneliness, anxiety, depression, and overstimulation among young people.

04 Cyberbullying remains a critical and pervasive issue. Tackling it effectively requires coordinated, multi-layered interventions that must extend beyond the school environment to involve institutional policy, law enforcement, and dedicated support services.

05 While the culture of online anonymity fosters freedom of expression, it has simultaneously diluted individual accountability for harmful speech, complicating efforts to ensure a healthy civic digital environment.

06 Data confirmed an alarming rise in incidents, with reported cases of cyberviolence in France soaring from 55,000 in 2023 to 160,000 in 2024. Calls from minors contemplating suicide increased dramatically from four per year to four per week over the last decade.

07 A Slovenian study linked the decline in well-being directly to early and intensive smartphone use, leading to proposals to delay smartphone ownership and regulate device use in schools to protect the integrity of the learning environment during critical developmental stages.

08 A unique and acute challenge involves fostering digital inclusion and well-being for children who have experienced trauma. For these young people, the digital world can feel particularly threatening, requiring specialised approaches that prioritise safety, trust, and empowerment.

INFORMATION WARFARE AND
GEOPOLITICAL THREATS

- 01 Foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) is “the battle of our time”, viewed as a strategic assault on national sovereignty that weaponizes information to undermine democratic institutions.
- 02 In specific geopolitical contexts, such as Georgia, this challenge is intensified by state-level disinformation campaigns and Russian-style propaganda, which are coupled with a decline in media freedom. These concerted efforts actively erode trust in legitimate journalism, making media literacy a critical component of national resilience.
- 03 This environment compounds the difficulty learners face in distinguishing reliable information from unreliable sources, evidenced by a prevalent tendency to trust initial search results or peer-shared content without critical evaluation.



FOUNDATIONAL AND
SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

- 01 A significant conceptual barrier is the prevalence of a “protectionist approach” in media literacy, which frames youth as susceptible and passive victims of media manipulation. This alarmist “risk narrative” undermines efforts to cultivate agency, viewing young people as objects to be protected rather than as competent and active participants in the digital sphere.
- 02 The primary mandate of education is to instil the values necessary to ensure that technology serves democratic ends. While technology is neutral, the human agency directing it is not, making education critical for upholding democratic principles.
- 03 Beyond user-facing issues, the digital economy presents profound ethical and environmental challenges. These include the exploitation of “click workers” in developing nations who train AI systems at a frenetic pace, and the significant environmental cost of the digital footprint, from data centres to device manufacturing.

Pedagogical challenges

The contextual challenges previously outlined create a series of direct pedagogical hurdles for educators, parents, and school systems. The speed of technological change, coupled with a complex socio-political landscape, places immense pressure on educational institutions to adapt their methods, resources, and stakeholder engagement strategies effectively.

CHALLENGES IN
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 01 Parents and schools often operate in isolation, lacking the necessary dialogue and collaboration. This deficit of trust and communication fosters the perception that neither side fully prioritises DCE, leaving students feeling unsupported.
- 02 As schools rapidly digitalise, parents often feel overwhelmed and ill-equipped to manage their children’s digital lives, lacking a practical guide to balance online safety with educational access.
- 03 Translating complex policy documents into effective, day-to-day classroom practice is difficult due to the workload and limited time available for teachers to digest dense frameworks.
- 04 Research revealed a significant discrepancy in how parents and children perceive technological risks. This gap complicates efforts by parents and carers to provide effective guidance and support, often leading to miscommunication and ineffective interventions.

CHALLENGES OF OUTDATED
PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

- 01 Traditional, text-heavy teaching methods are proving increasingly ineffective at engaging learners who primarily receive information through algorithmically curated platforms. This challenge is now amplified by the rise of generative AI, which introduces new risks such as high hallucination rates and the proliferation of sophisticated, misleading outputs.
- 02 The gap between digital innovation and classroom practice leaves many young people in a state of passive consumerism, ill-equipped to actively question or create content.
- 03 This pedagogical deficit is exacerbated by the systemic difficulty of translating complex policy documents into effective, day-to-day classroom practice, given the workload and limited time available for teachers to digest dense frameworks.

Proposed Solutions

This section presents the actionable and innovative solutions proposed during the conference to drive the implementation of the Council of Europe’s strategic objectives. In response to the complex challenges identified, these proposals are organised into three key intervention levels: high-level strategies for decision-makers, practical applications at the school level, and essential support structures within the wider school community. This integrated, multi-level approach is designed to foster a resilient and democratic digital society from the top down and the bottom up.

Decision-makers level

These solutions are directed at national and European decision-makers responsible for creating the enabling conditions for effective Digital Citizenship Education.

01 To move beyond isolated projects, member states must develop unified national strategies, such as Georgia’s National Cybersecurity Strategy (2021–2024) and Unified National Strategy of Education & Science (2022–2030), which formally embed digital and media literacy as national priorities.

02 As teachers are the linchpin of any successful DCE strategy, it is non-negotiable to provide robust training, practical tools, and sustained support, while ensuring they operate within a school-wide culture of DCE. Successful national programmes integrate Media Literacy across the curriculum, using media as a resource, a tool for higher-order thinking, and a means for creative expression.

03 Successful national models for teacher training provide a clear blueprint for action. The Albanian model, for instance, integrates Media and Information Literacy (MIL) across the curriculum through three distinct dimensions: MIL as a complementary curricular resource, as an instrument for developing higher order thinking skills, and as a means for creative expression. Similarly, Italy’s “Innovamenti” training program, delivered via the “Scuola Futura” platform, systematically equips teachers using the Council of Europe’s DCE framework.

04 The principle that data protection is a prerequisite for citizen defence can be operationalized through sustained, nationwide educational programs. Poland’s “Your data – Your concern” initiative, running since 2009, serves as an exemplary model of how a data protection authority can systematically raise awareness among students and teachers, providing handbooks, training, and fostering cooperation with other key institutions like the Ombudsman for Children and the Digital Citizenship Institute.



05 To counter the erosion of responsibility online, a three-tiered digital identity framework (“Louvain-la-Neuve Declaration”) was proposed, allowing users to choose between verified, verifiable, and anonymous profiles. This system aims to restore accountability and trust without eliminating privacy.

06 National strategies are best supported by large-scale collaborative networks like the European Digital Education Hub (EDEH), a community of over 7,500 members dedicated to overcoming fragmentation. The EDEH’s use of targeted working groups, or “Squads”, to unite passionate experts in creating inspiring and practical resources like the “DCE awareness raising kit” demonstrates a powerful model for European-level cooperation.

07 To ensure sustained impact and momentum, successful grassroots campaigns must be institutionalized at a European level. The “European Digital Citizenship Education Week”, which mobilized over 100 local events across 15 countries, should be established as a recurring, annual event to coordinate activities, share best practices, and maintain public engagement.

08 Responsible DCE begins before technology is introduced. Projects advocate for grounding DCE in innate character, using a values-based framework to cultivate virtues such as self-discipline, compassion, and responsibility in early childhood (ages 3–5).

09 The “whole-school approach” is insufficient. A “whole-of-society” model is necessary to build mutual trust by actively mobilising schools, families, community organisations, and policymakers in a shared mission (including dialogue, training, all voices...).

10 The success of a national digital blueprint for building trust is rooted in core principles: providing “digital by design” public services, treating citizens as responsible adults, and offering powerful tools for direct democratic participation, such as granting the right to vote at age 16.

School level

This section focuses on translating macro-level strategies into practical, classroom-based innovations and whole-school cultural shifts. Effective implementation at the school level requires not only new tools and curricula but also a fundamental change in pedagogical philosophy and organisational structure.

01 A fundamental pedagogical shift from a protectionist to a “rights-based approach” is required. This model treats youth not as vulnerable subjects needing protection but as capable and competent individuals with agency. It empowers them to engage with media as a mode of self-expression and social activism, fostering an inclusive and empowering educational experience.

02 This philosophy should be implemented through a structured, multi-faceted “whole-school approach” model that addresses six key areas: the Vision of the school, Leadership, Practices of the teaching community, Pedagogical practices, School-level knowledge practices, and Digital resources. This requires a shift from vertical hierarchies to horizontal relationships and the adoption of specific techniques such as connection and feedback practices and the development of students’ metacognitive skills.

03 The transformation of students from passive consumers to active creators is powerfully demonstrated by Slovenia’s “Časoris” project, a journalism initiative where children work with mentors to write and publish their own news stories. This grassroots model has proven effective in helping participants develop ethical guidelines, appreciate transparency, and hold media accountable.

04 The challenge of negative online virality can be reframed as an opportunity (e.g., for at-risk children, particularly those who have experienced trauma) by using AI-based tools and platforms to create positive, empowering educational content. These should be coordinated and monitored by qualified professionals providing post-traumatic psychological support. This approach recognizes that virality is driven by mindset rather than technology and equips educators to generate their own engaging videos and Open Educational Resources.

05 Gamified learning tools are essential for engaging young people. The European Commission's "Pixelmedia" project uses a hybrid video game to confront learners with digital dilemmas, while a similar project in Türkiye co-developed a web-based video game with lower secondary school students to teach the 10 domains of DCE, with a focus on privacy through a "no data retention" policy.

06 A pedagogical framework centred on critical inquiry should guide students to ask fundamental questions about technology: How do algorithms affect our lives? What sources are reliable? Who decides the order of search results? This method shifts the focus from instrumental skills to deep, critical understanding of digital systems.

07 The use of storytelling was advocated as a highly effective tool for teaching digital ethics. Methods like the "3 Cs" (Character, Challenge, Choice & Consequence) guide students to explore realistic digital dilemmas through narrative, proving far more impactful than traditional rules-based lectures.

08 Peer support programmes provide a powerful, replicable model for leveraging trained student volunteers as a crucial first line of support. These initiatives effectively bridge the communication gap between the student body and adult supervisors, fostering a culture of peer-to-peer accountability and support.



School community level

Effective digital citizenship education cannot exist in a school vacuum; it requires the active, coordinated, and informed participation of the entire community, especially parents, youth workers, and local organisations, to create a cohesive ecosystem of support.

01 A successful three-pronged model for parental digital literacy includes practical workshops, an accessible “Digital Parenting Guide”, and an evolving online platform for expert-led webinars and community support. A critical leverage point for this is kindergarten, where teachers can act as key mediators to engage parents at the very beginning of a child’s digital journey.

02 Beyond the formal school system, youth workers are critical actors who require practical tools. A dedicated training kit, as created under an Erasmus+ supported project, provides methods for engaging youth in discussions about rights and responsibilities and for building safe, participatory digital spaces in non-formal settings.

03 Digital inclusion must extend to rural and underserved communities by using accessible, mobile-first technologies. The “Coding in Trikeri” project in a rural Greek village demonstrated that children can be empowered to move from consumers to creators using only their mobile phones and creative coding apps like OctoStudio, proving that meaningful digital learning can be achieved even with limited infrastructure.

04 Higher education has a vital role in bridging digital innovation and ethical responsibility. This includes integrating AI-driven systems to increase student engagement while mandating human oversight and using technology like blockchain to ensure institutional trust and combat fraud.

05 To ensure equitable access and broad adoption, educational resources for DCE should be published under Creative Commons licenses and developed using open-source code whenever possible. This facilitates translation, adaptation, and sharing across member states.

06 In addition to resources for adults, there is a need for child-centric learning tools. The “Digi-Nauts” initiative provides a suite of interactive materials designed to help children and adolescents directly learn about safe online behaviour, critical thinking, and their digital rights and responsibilities in an age-appropriate manner.

Road map

The strategic imperative emerging from the European Year 2025 is clear: the era of fragmented, project-based initiatives, however valuable, is insufficient for the systemic challenges ahead. This section details the draft version of the Council of Europe Road map 2027-31, a five-year framework aimed to elevate DCE from a niche educational concern to a core, pan-European policy priority.

The overarching vision is that learners in Europe are empowered to act as active, responsible, and ethical digital citizens, engaging in safe, inclusive, and democratic digital environments. They must be equipped with the skills to critically navigate technologies, build trust, and co-create a resilient digital society across generations.

VISION PRINCIPLES



An emphasis on a transparent and ethical approach ensures all development and implementation is open, accountable, and adheres strictly to Council of Europe standards on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.



Policy coherence is vital, ensuring all DCE initiatives align with existing European and national strategies, laws, and competence frameworks to set clear objectives, avoid duplication, and maximise impact.



Co-creation and inclusiveness mandate actively engaging a wide range of stakeholders – including educators, youth, civil society, and marginalised groups – to ensure that the road map and its outcomes meet the needs of diverse communities.



The principle of sustainability and flexibility commits to building for long-term institutional impact while remaining adaptable to the rapid pace of technological change, thereby ensuring the framework remains relevant and future-proof.

The Road map is structured around four interconnected pathways, each with specific objectives and planned activities designed to create synergistic progress.

01 **POLICY ADVANCEMENT FOR DCE**

Policy and good governance principles for DCE focuses on establishing DCE as a long-term, high-level policy priority in all member states and on embedding good governance principles based on trust and collaboration. Key actions include identifying and addressing gaps in national policies, adopting a common DCE framework updated for emerging challenges like AI and data governance, supporting the formulation of comprehensive national strategies, and publishing a biennial “State of Digital Citizenship in Europe” report to monitor progress.

02 **COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS RAISING**

Communication and awareness raising aims to raise broad public and political awareness of the benefits of DCE and to engage diverse stakeholders in supporting the Council of Europe’s framework. Planned activities include establishing a high-level DCE Advisory Group, developing a Charter for Digital Citizenship Education to promote core principles, introducing an annual “Digital Citizenship Education Week” to maintain momentum, and launching a “Council of Europe DCE Award” to celebrate innovation and excellence.

03 **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Education and training pathway seeks to comprehensively integrate DCE into all aspects of formal, non-formal, and lifelong learning and to promote robust international collaboration. Key actions focus on mobilizing the DCE Planner as a core curriculum instrument, preparing guidelines for continuous teacher training (with a focus on AI literacy), ensuring the integration of DCE concepts into textbooks and educational resources in at least 20 member states, and updating key competence frameworks like the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC).

04 **LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Learning environments and infrastructure is dedicated to fostering safe, inclusive, and trust-building digital learning environments and promoting platforms for knowledge exchange. Key activities include implementing a “whole school” approach to digital safety involving all stakeholders, supporting the creation of youth-led DCE labs to foster innovation, building a shared European resource pool for educational materials, and implementing comprehensive strategies to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access for all learners.



The Road map implementation is structured across four phases: the Preparatory phase (2025–2026) for planning and final approval; the Capacity Expansion phase (2027–2028) for mainstreaming DCE via policy, communication, and training; the Consolidation phase (2029–2030) for impact assessment and sustainability; and the final Legacy and Future-Proofing phase (2031) for comprehensive evaluation and securing

lasting institutional impact. The ultimate success of this strategic architecture depends on its ability to protect fundamental rights. Given this vision, the principles, pathways, and timeline of the Road map, conference participants were invited to submit improvement proposals across four key levels, which are addressed below.



PROPOSALS TO STREAMLINE THE ROAD MAP’S IMPLEMENTATION

A strategic Road map, however well-conceived, requires a concrete implementation plan co-created and owned by the community it is intended to serve. Several sessions of the conference were dedicated to this pragmatic task, harnessing the collective intelligence of participants in collaborative workshops. This section consolidates the actionable strategies generated during these sessions, presenting a coherent framework for action, communication, partnership, and evaluation to ensure the Road map’s success.

01
ACTIONS TO BE DEVELOPED
AND REPORTING
MECHANISMS

Participants identified a clear need for a multi-level, cascading model for capacity building and resource development. The primary recommendation is to establish a mentorship system where EU-level experts train national teacher trainers, who in turn train school-level multipliers. This must be supported by the development of educational materials targeted at diverse and often-overlooked groups, including parents, kindergarten teachers, school principals, and youth workers. A critical shift in perspective was also demanded, namely that youth associations must be recognized and integrated as leaders and co-creators of activities, not merely as participants. Finally, it was agreed that any implementation must ensure the Council of Europe’s DCE Planner is meticulously aligned with emerging standards on privacy and fully reflects the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

02
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
TO BE IMPLEMENTED

Participants designed a multi-channel communication strategy focused on building ecosystems, generating momentum, and fostering engagement at all levels. The cornerstone of this strategy involves establishing national ecosystems, creating sustainable networks of diverse stakeholders, such as national broadcasters, data protection commissions, and ministries, to coordinate national efforts. To maintain focus at the European level, two key initiatives were proposed: launching a recurring “European DCE Week” to coordinate activities across all member states and creating a high-profile European ambassador programme to champion DCE, leveraging existing, trusted networks like Erasmus+ to amplify these efforts. Finally, at the local level, creative and versatile formats, such as travelling awareness campaigns, are needed to foster grassroots engagement in schools and communities. A crucial consensus point was the need for strategic outreach to school leaders and principals, who are the ultimate gatekeepers for creating the necessary time and space for DCE within crowded curricula.

03
IDENTIFICATION OF
PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

Success depends on building a broad coalition and making strategic use of existing assets. The identified coalition of key partners is expansive, including youth, game developers, policymakers from multiple ministries, scientists, and journalists. The core resource strategy is not to create new materials from scratch but to prioritize the mapping, curation, and promotion of high-quality existing resources, whose primary challenge is a lack of visibility, not existence. The most significant investment required is in coordination itself, providing the time and structured space for joint planning and training among different actors to reduce redundant effort and build a more coherent, impactful ecosystem.

04
STRATEGY FOR EVALUATING
THE PLAN’S IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure accountability and continuous improvement, a robust evaluation framework must be built into the Road map from its inception, not treated as an afterthought. Participants also agreed on several core principles: i) the development of a comprehensive toolkit of shared evaluation concepts and methodologies for use at both national and European levels; ii) the use of a “group of country wizards” to facilitate peer learning and support for evaluation activities; iii) a commitment to focusing all communication and action on measurable outcomes to maintain the momentum of the European Year 2025. Finally, the Council of Europe is asked to provide clear guidance on how the central Road map can actively support and incentivize these evaluation activities at the local and national levels.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The “Way Forward” conference, held in Ljubljana, did not merely constitute the formal conclusion of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) 2025, but served as a decisive turning point. By gathering 180 key stakeholders, from policymakers to educators and civil society representatives, the event fulfilled the purpose of transitioning from foundational theoretical work to a phase of coordinated and impactful action. The following analysis details the added value of this event regarding European objectives, synthesises the conceptual shifts achieved, and outlines the guiding lines for the immediate future.

ADDED VALUE OF THE CONFERENCE

The “Way Forward” conference was a decisive turning point, successfully transitioning the European Year of DCE into a phase of coordinated, impactful action.

Its primary added value was threefold: it established strategic consensus directly informing the DCE Road map 2027-2031; it tackled existing fragmentation by reinforcing democratic resilience through a collaborative platform; and it underscored the need to move from a “whole-school” to a “whole-of-society” approach to amplify DCE’s visibility.



MAIN CONCEPTUAL OUTCOMES

The discussions and key interventions crystallised fundamental paradigm shifts necessary to face the interconnected ecosystem of digital pressures:

- 01** From protecting to agency - The consensus advocates for an effective shift towards a rights-based approach, empowering learners as active, competent digital citizens.
- 02** Centrality of human agency - Education is the critical instrument for sustaining democratic values to ensure technology serves humans positively and constructively, especially in the context of algorithms that shape perceptions.
- 03** DCE as defence of Democracy - DCE was redefined as a matter of national sovereignty and democratic resilience against information warfare, making media literacy a vital component of national security.
- 04** Well-being and platform design - Pedagogical challenges are now inseparable from the “attention economy” business model, establishing that DCE must address how platform designs exploit the psychological vulnerability of youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIONS

Beyond the detailed implementation of the Road Map 2027-2031, three priority strategic directions emerge to ensure the sustainability and impact of DCE in Europe:

- 01** Institutionalisation and national strategy - Member states should prioritise unified national strategies over isolated initiatives to formally integrate digital and media literacy into national education and security priorities. This requires creating national collaborative ecosystems uniting schools, policymakers, and families.
- 02** Teacher capacity building and cascading mentorship - Teacher training is non-negotiable. It is strongly recommended to implement continuous teacher training and cascading mentorship models. This must be accompanied by the production of open, adaptable resources focused on ethical dilemmas and critical thinking.
- 03** Evidence-based evaluation - A robust evaluation framework must be established from the outset, using shared successful methodologies and peer groups (“country wizards”) for monitoring support.
- 04** Network consolidation - Momentum must be maintained by institutionalising the “European Digital Citizenship Education Week” and actively leveraging studies like the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2027 for policy-relevant evidence on learner competences and teacher preparedness.

The full conference programme, video clips with selected speeches and sessions of the conference and the photo gallery are available via this QR code.



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